

The World's Leading Mystery Magazine

ELLERY QUEEN'S

Mystery Magazine

FEBRUARY 35¢ 1963

WINNER OF A SECOND PRIZE

PAT McGERR

JUSTICE HAS A HIGH PRICE

Patricia Highsmith

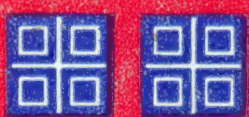
William P. McGivern

Manly Wade Wellman

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Ellery Queen

NEW!

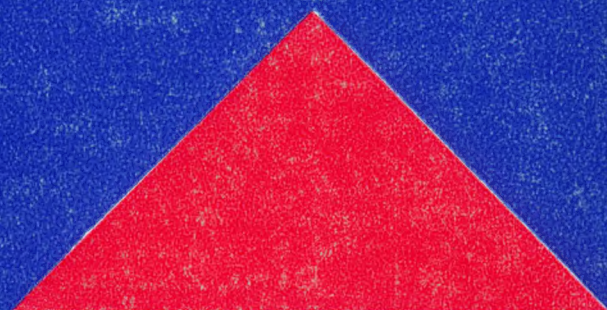
HUGH 
PENTECOST

**DELINQUENT
ACCOUNT * ***

an exciting
novelette

**CORNELL
WOOLRICH**

**THE
CAPE**



TRIANGULAR

The World's Leading Mystery Magazine

ELLERY QUEEN'S *Mystery Magazine*

including BLACK MASK MAGAZINE

10 editions: U.S.A., Australian, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese

WINNER OF A SECOND PRIZE

JUSTICE HAS A HIGH PRICE

Pat McGerr 5

DETECTIVE NOVELETTE

THE CAPE TRIANGULAR

Cornell Woolrich 17-96

CRIME STORIES

GRACIOUS, PLEASANT LIFE OF MRS. AFTON Patricia Highsmith 41

FISH STORY Leslie Gordon Barnard 107

DARL I LUV U Joe Gores 109

DELINQUENT ACCOUNT Hugh Pentecost 121

DETECTIVE STORIES

THE HAPPY DAYS CLUB James M. Ullman 30

THE LAST WORD William P. McGivern 51

THE RICHARD CORY MURDER CASE Manly Wade Wellman 81

MYSTERY AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS Ellery Queen 88

EQMM "FIRST STORY"

HOME OFFICE: 221B BAKER STREET Robert & Michael Zimler 61

SPECIAL FEATURE

TWO POEMS Edwin Arlington Robinson 80-86

MYSTERY HARDCOVERS OF THE MONTH

60

MYSTERY PAPERBACKS OF THE MONTH

60

BEST MYSTERIES OF THE MONTH

Anthony Boucher 79

PUBLISHER: B. G. Davis

EDITOR: Ellery Queen

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, Vol. 41, No. 2, Whole No. 231, FEB., 1963. Published monthly by Davis Publications, Inc. at 35¢ a copy. Annual subscription \$4.00 in U.S.A. and possessions and Canada; \$5.00 in the Pan American Union; \$5.00 in all other countries. Publication Office, 10 Ferry St., Concord, N. H. Editorial and General offices, 505 Park Ave., New York 22, N. Y. Change of address notices, undeliverable copies, orders for subscriptions, and other mail items are to be sent to 505 Park Ave., New York 22, N. Y. Second-Class postage paid at Concord, N. H. © 1962 by Davis Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Protection secured under the Universal Copyright Convention and the Pan American Copyright Convention. Printed in U.S.A. Submissions must be accompanied by stamped self-addressed envelope; the Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts.

JOEL DAVIS, Assistant Publisher
MELVIN FLAMM, Business Manager

PAUL W. FAIRMAN, Managing Editor
CONSTANCE DI RIENZO, Executive Editorial Secretary
FRANK TAGGART, Art Director

CRÈME DE LA CRIME



THE BODY AT MADMAN'S BEND • *Arthur W. Upfield*. Rifle in hand, an eighteen-year-old girl waits for her drunken stepfather to come home—and draws detective Inspector Napoleon Bonaparte into one of his strangest cases. \$3.50

NO QUESTIONS ASKED • *Forbes Rydell*. Two young people, caught in the vicious web of a black-market baby racket, undertake a heartbreaking search for their child. \$3.50

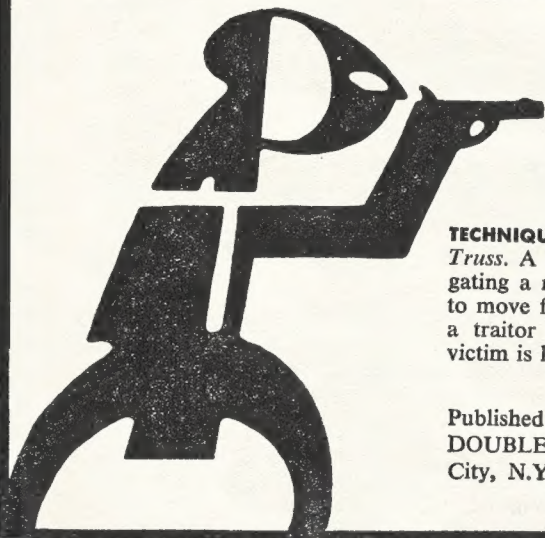
MOURNER'S VOYAGE • *Shane Martin*. A shipload of mourners, accompanying the ashes of gangster Guiseppe Simone to a Mediterranean island, are shocked when *another* Guiseppe Simone turns up—in the Naples morgue. \$3.50

THE DIPLOMAT AND THE GOLD PIANO • *Margaret Scherf*. Two New York interior designers decorate the apartment of an African diplomat—and wind up involved in international intrigue and murder in Manhattan. \$3.50

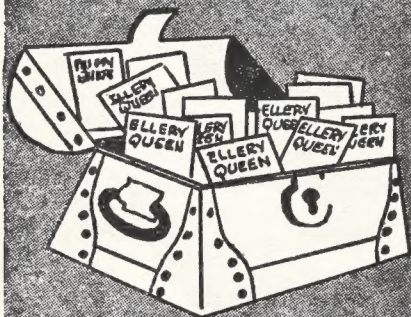
DEADLY CONTACT • *Amber Dean*. Both murderer and motive seem strangely absent when a Rochester Post Office driver falls into a death trap that had been set for another man. \$3.50

TECHNIQUE FOR TREACHERY • *Seldon Truss*. A London police officer, investigating a murder, has two good reasons to move fast—the murderer is probably a traitor to his country . . . and the victim is his own father. \$3.50

Published for the **CRIME CLUB** by
DOUBLEDAY & CO., INC., Garden
City, N.Y.



HIDDEN TREASURES



We've been house-cleaning. And what do you think we found? A rare treasure-lode of back copies of **ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE**. Hundreds and hundreds in mint condition, running back as far as 1958—as recently as 1962.

Yes, we've uncovered them in closets, trunks, files—at the printer's, warehouses and our own editors' most secret compartments.

Would you like to share this "find" with us? Besides, enjoy some top reading?

Send us \$1.00. We'll send you 10 (yes, ten) assorted back copies. Sorry, but requests for specific issues cannot be handled.

Original value: \$3.50—you pay only \$1. First come, first served, until the supply is exhausted.

ELLERY QUEEN'S HOUSEKEEPER

505 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

YES... here's my \$1.00. Send me the ten assorted back copies of **ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE**.

Name _____
(Please Print)

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____



you'll find you are in for tempting big reports on all the worthwhile new mobile homes and travel trailers—colorful "camera tours" through America's most exciting parks—expert articles for your more enjoyable and profitable mobile home living. For new subscribers, mail the coupon below.

THE NEXT 10 ISSUES



for only \$2.69

**ACT NOW ON THIS OPPORTUNITY
CLIP COUPON—MAIL TODAY**

MOBILE HOME JOURNAL

505 PARK AVENUE

NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

E263

YES Enter my introductory subscription at the money-saving rate of only \$2.69 for the next 10 issues.

☐ Payment Enclosed

☐ Bill me later

Name _____

(please print)

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Outside USA and Canada, add \$1

Winner of a Second Prize**AUTHOR:****PAT McGERR****TITLE:*****Justice Has a High Price*****TYPE:**

Crime Story

LOCALE:

United States

TIME:

The Present

COMMENTS:

The case against Charles Selden was one bad break after another—a case in which everything went wrong. Was there any power on earth that could save him?

CHARLES SELDEN WAS DREAMING—One of those oppressive, frustrating nightmares that had lately become so frequent for him—and the scream at first seemed part of the pattern. Then he was awake and realized it was his wife's voice, high-pitched and ear-shattering.

He opened his eyes to see her sitting upright in the adjoining bed, one arm pointing toward the bureau. In the same instant there was an explosion and a flash of fire, and the scream was cut off and she slumped down in the bed.

Moving by instinct, without time for thought or fear, he threw aside the covers and leaped toward the shadowy figure across the room. The gun spoke again. He didn't count the shots, hardly felt the bul-

let that seared his left shoulder. In seconds he was on the intruder with an impact that knocked the gun from his hand and made it skim across the slick bedroom floor.

There was no contest. The stranger, slightly built and now weaponless, wanted only to escape. Twisting from Selden's grasp, he hurled himself through the ground-floor window by which he had entered. Racing after him, Selden's bare foot collided with the dropped pistol. He picked it up and carried it to the window, but the intruder had vanished into the trees behind the cabin. Clearly visible in the moonlight, the man's footprints marked the light coating of fresh snow.

Snow, Charles noted with a rush

of familiar irritation. I told Helen we were due for bad weather. It was sheer stubborn nonsense to stay on in a summer cottage until snow falls. Then the thought struck him that they would not argue about this, or anything else, again. Helen's been killed and I—His hand went to his shoulder, felt the blood sticky on his pajama collar, and he knew a sudden faintness. Must get help. A doctor. Police. He started for the telephone between the two beds . . .

"Then I must have blacked out." Again and again he was to tell his story—first to the police, later to his lawyer, finally at the trial. "The next thing I remember, I was lying on the floor with my head feeling very fuzzy. I pulled myself up, got to Helen, and she—she wasn't breathing. There was no pulse, and I knew she was dead. I dialed the operator—I guess I couldn't have been very coherent, but she got word to the right people—and then there was nothing to do but wait."

The first policeman listened with a sort of stolid sympathy, asking few questions, making many notes. The only hint of skepticism came when Selden, striving for a description of the man he had grappled so briefly, suggested, "There are footprints in the snow outside. Won't they give you some idea of his size and help in identification?"

"Not now, there aren't," the officer answered. "It started snowing

again about the time your call came through. That's what slowed us getting here. So if there were any prints, they're all filled in."

"Bad luck." Following another thought, Charles missed the significance of the policeman's *if*. "That road up the mountain's hard going when it's wet and slippery."

"And even worse when it's icy, like tonight. We don't usually have summer people here after the end of September. Yours is the only cabin still open."

"I know," Charles said. "The Davises, next door, went home ten days ago. I suppose that prowler, whoever he was, thought the whole area was deserted. A good time to pick up anything valuable that might have been left behind."

"Yeah, I guess that's what he thought," the officer said absently. He looked up as the medical examiner came out of the bedroom. "You finished in there, Doc?"

"All finished. No use trying to get an ambulance up here till daylight."

"I'll leave Murph on duty," the police captain said. "You be all right here, Mr. Selden? Or would you like to ride into town with us?"

"I'll stay here," Charles answered. "Unless there's some way I can help find the man who did it."

"Leave that to us. If he's still in the woods, we'll have him before morning. If he's gotten farther away—well, it'll take a little longer. Ready to go, Doc?"

"Ready. Don't worry about that shoulder, Mr. Selden." He glanced with professional satisfaction at the dressing he'd applied. "The bullet just grazed the flesh. Lucky for you it wasn't a couple of inches to the right."

Lucky. The word rang strangely in Charles's ears as he watched their car head down the narrow road. Very lucky. Deliberately he kept his thoughts away from the bedroom where a young police sergeant kept watch over Helen's body.

When the captain returned the next day, his inquiry veered quickly away from the subject of the prowler and went on to other matters.

"This is the fourth year you've come here, right, Mr. Selden? Do you always stay on into October?"

"No, we usually leave much earlier. But my wife loves—loved the outdoors. She never got tired of tramping over the hills or fishing the streams. So she was set on staying as long as the good weather lasted." More set on it, he added mentally, because she knew I was dying to get back to the city. Knew that and probably guessed why.

"And you didn't have to hurry back to a job?"

"My job can always wait." Bitterness edged Charles's voice. "It's with the family firm."

"Your family's?"

"No, my wife's."

The questions then grew more

pressing, more personal—till Selden finally exploded.

"What the devil are you driving at? My wife's been killed, her murderer's on the loose, and you sit here prying into our private life! Sure, we had arguments. Show me any couple married five years who doesn't. But that's not going to help you find the man who shot her."

"We'll find him," the captain said, "if you'll just be patient. I know this is a bad time for you, Mr. Selden, but we have to cover all the angles."

So Charles went on answering questions whose relevance he didn't understand until the interview was interrupted by the arrival of Helen's brother. They exchanged awkward condolences, discussed the necessary funeral arrangements. Charles had never been at ease with Arthur and if there was now an additional restraint, it seemed sufficiently explained by the circumstances.

But Charles still had no sense of his own jeopardy. Awareness began only when he read the evening paper. His story of the prowler with a gun was hedged throughout with doubting phrases—"Selden said," "Selden claimed," "according to Selden."

"My God!" He spoke aloud to the empty room. "They make it sound as if I'd invented the whole thing, as if there were no burglar, as if—oh, my God!"

But his panic quickly faded,

snuffed out by his knowledge that there had indeed been a burglar. They'll find him, he thought, and that will be the end of it. Or even if the search fails, there must be plenty of evidence that the man was here. They have his gun—it can surely be traced. He probably left fingerprints. One way or another, there will be a dozen proofs of his existence.

Charles's confidence held through more interrogations and up to the time, right after Helen's burial, when he was arrested. He sat, stunned with disbelief, in a sparsely furnished jail cell, charged with the murder of his wife.

It was impossible, incredible, a new nightmare from which he must soon awaken. But it did not take on full reality until he sat across a table from the lawyer sent by his brother-in-law. From him came a crushing bit of news. The gun dropped by the intruder had been checked: it belonged to the owner of the cabin next door.

"Len Davis?" Charles asked, puzzled. "That doesn't make sense."

"The lock on the Davis' back door was broken. The rooms were disordered. Mr. Davis says he kept the gun in a desk drawer."

"Then the fellow must have gone in there before he came to our place." Charles's spirits lifted. "That adds up, doesn't it? Proves there was a stranger in the area, even if the police haven't been able

to round him up. So why are they holding me?"

"They have a different theory," the lawyer answered. "Davis told them you knew about the gun."

"Sure I knew about it. Most of the summer he was only able to get out of town on week-ends and his wife was a little nervous about being up there alone. He got the gun for her protection. He even set up a target on one of the trees where she could practice. But what's that got to do with— No! Are they saying I broke into the Davis place and stole his gun and tried to make it look like— But that's crazy!"

"We have to face facts," the lawyer said. "The Davises left two weeks ago. That left you alone on the hilltop, free to plan and do whatever you chose in complete privacy. That's how it looks to the police."

"Facts, hell! I'll tell you how it looks to the police. They've a killing to solve and the killer's disappeared. What they want is a sitting duck—a nice neat solution worked out without leaving their arm-chairs. They've called off the hunt now, haven't they? They can save themselves a lot of trouble by simply pinning it on me."

"I'm sure the search is still on. But the chances of finding the man get less with each day that passes."

"No fingerprints, I suppose?"

"No. Presumably he wore gloves."

"One bad break after another! No prints—a gun from next door

—snow covering his tracks. What else have they got against me?"

"The police have your pajama top with powder burns around the bullet hole. That's a clear indication of a self-inflicted wound. At least, it proves the gun was fired at close range."

"Of course it was fired at close range," Charles snapped. "I was damn near on top of the fellow when the bullet hit me. Everything they have is negative. There's no evidence at all pointing my way."

The case in the newspapers, though, began to appear more positive. Without taking a stand on Charles's guilt or innocence, the stories made it clear that there was only his unsupported word to indicate the existence of a prowler. Even the simple biographical details about him, it seemed to Charles, were slanted toward the worst possible interpretation.

"The jury's obliged to come to court without an opinion." He slammed the paper down in front of the lawyer. "But there won't be an unbiased juror in the state if they keep printing stuff like that."

"We can't stop them," the other returned, "unless they publish something that's not true."

"There are ways of twisting the truth, of making it seem worse than it is." Charles crumpled the sheet into a ball, flung it across the room. "I don't deny that Helen was rich and I was poor. I was a salesman for the Kent Company when I

started taking her out and after the wedding I was vice-president. But that isn't why I married her. And even if it had been, it's a long jump from marrying for money to killing for it."

"A very long jump," the lawyer agreed.

"There was something between us in the beginning," Charles went on. "But it didn't last. How could it in that setup? I wasn't cut out to be a gigolo. I had ideas about the company, ways of improving distribution, reorganizing the sales force—but everything I suggested ran into Arthur's veto. He was willing to give me a fancy title, an upholstered office, and a generous drawing account. All he asked in return was that I keep my nose out of the business and make his sister happy. I scored high on the first requirement, but struck out on the second. Helen started drinking too much, and so did I. And sometimes we shouted at each other in public. But I'm sure you've heard all this from Arthur."

"He filled in some of the background, yes."

"There are plenty of witnesses to the failure of our marriage. They won't help my case, will they?"

"No," the lawyer said, "they won't. But none of that will matter if the real killer is found. And I've some good news for you there. Mr. Kent has engaged a private investigator to supplement the police search."

"That's decent of Arthur—and a little surprising. The way we've gotten along the last few years, I'd have expected him to dance at my hanging. I don't like taking favors from him either, but as things stand I don't have much choice. Justice has a high price tag. And I don't suppose there's much chance of my using any of Helen's money till I get out of here."

"No chance at all," the lawyer said. "So long as you're charged with her murder, you can't be her heir."

"Funny thing, once I'm acquitted, everything Helen owned will belong to me, including her half of the Kent Company. But if I should be convicted, it would all go to Arthur. Under the circumstances, I wonder if I'm being smart to let him pick my lawyer."

"Our firm has represented the Kent family for many years, Mr. Selden," the other said stiffly. "But of course if you feel that someone else could—"

"No offense," Charles said. "The thought just struck me. Arthur isn't going to like having me for a partner. But I don't really believe he'd try to frame me for murder. Not unless he thinks I did it. That's a possibility too."

"Mr. Kent is convinced of your innocence," the lawyer said. "We discussed the matter thoroughly before I accepted the case. As you say, he does not have a very high regard for you. But he has known

you for a long time and he doesn't believe you capable of premeditated murder."

"Lack of brains?" Charles asked. "Or lack of guts?"

"I don't pretend—" The lawyer then ignored the question. "He is chiefly motivated by concern for your welfare. Most of all, he wants his sister's murderer captured and brought to justice. He would also like to avoid the scandal that would inevitably result from your trial and conviction."

"That's a typically Arthurian motive," Charles said. "It's no disgrace to be shot by a stranger, but a murder within the family is a permanent blot. I'll concede that hard as it must be for him, Arthur's on my side. But what if the picture changes? If the evidence gets blacker against me, he may change his mind."

"Do you know of such evidence, Mr. Selden?"

"There's no evidence," Charles said firmly, "to support this charge of murder. Anything the police turn up has to confirm my story, help prove there was a robber in the house that night and that he shot Helen. But there are other facts—facts unrelated to the shooting—that might tip the scales for Arthur. Then what becomes of my defense?"

"Mr. Kent is paying my fee, Mr. Selden, but you are my client. My obligation to defend you is not subject to outside influences. I hope I

may have your full confidence."

"I'm sure you'll do your best," Charles answered with perfunctory politeness.

He did not, even then, believe that the quality of his defense was of real importance. To cooperate with the attorney, to answer his questions, to go through the motions of preparing for the trial—this was a routine that must be followed until the burglar was found. If Charles's hopes had temporarily sagged in the bleak atmosphere of the jail, they were freshly buoyed by the knowledge that a private investigator had entered the case. Today, tomorrow—it was only a matter of time till the criminal was taken. Then Charles would be free.

But the private search was no more fruitful than the official.

Time ran out and suddenly it was the day of the trial. Charles was swept by a near numbness as he sat in court, his attorney by his side, the prosecution staff across the aisle. He looked up at the judge, over to the jury box, back to the crowded spectators' section.

It was like an old movie into which he had suddenly been thrust as the leading actor. It can't be happening, his mind throbbed the refrain. It can't be happening to me. Memory swerved back to the beginning, to that moment of sudden awakening, to the sight of the stranger in the bedroom, to the roar and flash of the intruder's gun.

It will be all right, Charles told

himself as he fought his mounting tension. I'll tell my story to the jury and they'll believe me—they'll *have* to believe me. Yet he had told that story to the police and they had arrested him for murder; he'd told it to the press and their reports had insinuated his guilt.

"That man!" His control failed and he reached out to clutch his lawyer's arm. "Why can't they find him? They've got to find the man!"

They didn't find the man, but they found the woman.

On the third day after the jury was chosen, Diane took the stand as the prosecution's star witness and Charles watched his hopes dwindle to near zero.

She testified reluctantly, but the reluctance sprang from concern for her own reputation, not for his life. Once he caught her eye and she turned quickly away, but not before her glance had told him that she, like everyone else, believed he had killed his wife, believed he had done it for her—and feared and despised him for it. Yet looking at her in this courtroom he felt again the obsessive desire that had for so many months ruled his life.

Question by question, the prosecutor dragged from her the damning facts about their relationship. Her admission that she had been his mistress came in a voice that was barely audible, but Charles knew how loudly it must have sounded in the ears of the jurors.

"Did you have reason to believe," the questioning continued, "that the defendant intended to marry you?"

"Oh, yes." To this she could speak more firmly. "From the first he promised to get a divorce so that we could be married. He said it would take a little time to arrange, that I'd have to be patient. If I hadn't believed that, I would never have had anything to do with him."

"And when you found out that he wasn't going ahead with the divorce?"

"Then I told him that it had to be all over between us, that I wouldn't see him again, not ever."

The truth, Charles thought, but not the whole truth. That version left her with some shreds of respectability and he wouldn't strip them from her—wouldn't and couldn't, since to do so would establish even more strongly his reason for wishing his wife dead. He had a vivid recollection of that scene in Diane's apartment when she had at last forced a showdown.

"I'm not going on like this any longer, Charles." Her petulant little-girl voice had had an undertone of steel. "You still haven't said one word to your wife about a divorce and I don't believe you're ever going to. Are you, Charles?"

"It's not something to rush into, Diane." He had moved across the room to run his fingers through the soft fur of the scarf she had tossed on a chair. "Give me time."

"Time!" she had snapped. "For

weeks and weeks you've made promises and done nothing. Does it take so much time to sit down with your wife and tell her you're through?"

"That could be done very quickly," he'd admitted. "What takes time is the financial settlement."

"Financial? You mean she'll hold you up for a lot of alimony?"

"Alimony?" He'd stared at her, startled. "Are you serious, Diane? Don't you understand how things are with me?"

"What is there to understand? You have plenty of money—haven't you?"

"I don't have a dime. All I have is a high-sounding job that I got by marrying the boss' sister." He'd found a grim satisfaction in pressing it home. "You were my secretary for three weeks. I thought my situation was the talk of the company."

"Nobody said a word. Somebody should have warned me. *You* should have told me."

"I'm telling you now." He'd picked up the fur, waved it at her. "My wife's money paid for this. My wife's money pays for everything. And the day she agrees to a divorce, I'll be out on the street."

"You lied to me," she had said furiously. "You let me think you were rich and that we could be married. And all the time you were making a fool of me."

"That isn't what I had in mind." He'd gone back to the couch, put

his hands on her shoulders, tried to pull her toward him. "Is that all it ever was, Diane? Just money? Haven't you any—"

"Don't touch me." She had given him a hard push. "Liar! Fourflush-er!"

"Diane, please—"

"Get out!" She had sprung up, run to open the door to the hall. "Get out and don't come back. I never want to see you again, not ever."

It was that evening, in the finality of Diane's anger, that he agreed to go with Helen to the mountain cabin. But as the weeks passed he persuaded himself that the girl's decision was less than final, and he began to make allowances for her. Her rage, her disappointment were understandable. He had broken the news to her too abruptly. Naturally she felt herself deceived, ill-used. It wasn't true that she cared only for his money, and nothing for him. She had struck out only to hurt him.

He wrote her then and received no answer, and knew a growing anxiety to return to the city. He was sure that Helen sensed this and that it lay behind her insistence that they extend their stay in the cabin. Now in the courtroom he watched with horror as his letter to Diane was introduced as evidence.

What had he said? Desperately he tried to recall the phrases. I love you, I miss you, I need you. Certain-

ly he had said that. But what more? "I promise you, my darling, that I will very soon make arrangements so that we can be together. Nothing else matters." He had written that and had meant simply the firm resolution to find a job, any job outside the Kent Company, so that he could divorce Helen and marry Diane. But read aloud here, with the prosecutor's special emphasis, the "arrangements" translated to coldly calculated murder.

Watching Diane leave the stand, he felt for the first time a sense of total hopelessness. To anyone who saw her as he did, she must supply a full and compelling motive. To the others—to the virtuous, to the women on the jury—he was branded an adulterer. What matter if they found "reasonable doubt" of his guilt of the lesser crime? There could be no doubt that this girl was both desirable and expensive. To keep her he had to rid himself of his wife and retain his wife's money. What else could the jury believe?

This blanket of despair covered him through the rest of the trial. When it was his turn on the stand, he told his story with a robot-like precision which he knew, without being able to do anything about it, must rob it of all conviction. The cross-examination was heavy with sarcasm. Taking him through the whole tale again, the prosecutor began almost every question with the phrase, "You ask us to believe,"

in a way that drove a wide gap between each detail and human credibility.

"You ask us to believe, Mr. Selden—" the fortieth repetition grated on all his nerve ends—"that this unknown man who was an expert marksman when he was aiming at your wife turned into a rank amateur when you were the target."

"I don't know what kind of a marksman he was."

"Then let me refresh your memory. There were three bullets fired. One killed your wife. One was found by the police in the wall between the beds. One scraped your shoulder. So you ask us to believe that this alleged prowler was able to send a bullet directly through your wife's heart and then missed you entirely at the same distance."

"I was moving when he shot at me."

"Ah, yes, you were moving. So his first shot went wild and he shot again. And you ask us to believe that this mysterious stranger, firing at a moving target, placed his next bullet in a spot where it could draw a little blood, leave a small wound for the police to see, but do you no lasting damage. Do you really expect anyone to *believe* that?"

"It's the truth," Charles said doggedly. "It's the way it happened."

"The truth is what we're seeking," the prosecutor assured him. "But I think we can come a little closer to it than you have so far. I suggest that after you killed your

wife, you fired another bullet into the wall and then shot yourself in the shoulder to support your story of a prowler in the night."

"I didn't shoot myself," Charles said. "There was a prowler. That is the exact truth . . ."

By the time his testimony ended he felt a deadly certainty that, in the minds of judge, jury, and spectators, the prowler was a phantom, a man who never existed and could never be found. Almost with impatience he sat through his counsel's closing argument, seeing the weakness of his defense, its total dependence on his own word—in which no one now believed.

The prosecution's closing argument was circumstantial and convincing. If he was talking about someone else, Charles thought, I'd believe him—believe that this man, driven by desire, must have plotted the murder of his wife, broken into his neighbor's empty cabin to steal the gun he knew was there, and then, at his own convenience in the middle of the night, used it to kill his wife.

"But what a fool that makes me," he protested to his lawyer while they waited for the verdict. "I might have done all the things he said, but I'd know I couldn't get away with it, that I was putting my neck in a noose. To invent a robber who didn't exist would be too transparent, too stupid. But he did exist, he does exist, and somebody's got to find him."

"We're trying," the lawyer said. "We'll keep on trying."

The verdict was swift in coming and held no surprises. Guilty of murder in the first degree.

"We'll appeal, of course," the lawyer said. "And I've persuaded Mr. Kent to offer a substantial reward for information leading to the real murderer. We're not finished."

Oh, yes, I'm finished, Charles thought. I'm through clinging to slim hopes. It's easier to face the worst and just drift toward the end. He took for granted the denial of his appeal, listened stoically to the pronouncement of the death sentence, and expected no more from Arthur's offer of a reward than the usual lineup of crackpots.

So complete was his resignation that when his lawyer, ten days before the date set for the execution, brought him a fresh strand of hope, Charles almost refused to accept it.

"I know we've had a string of cranks who were only after the money or the publicity," the lawyer admitted. "It's the reward that brought this man forward, too, and he's not a very savory character, but his story checks out. He was driving on the main highway that links with the road to your cabin about 3 a.m. on the night of the murder. The police got your call at 3:10. Assuming it took the killer half an hour to get down the mountain, that would allow less than an hour from the time he was in your house

till you put in the call. That time fits pretty well, doesn't it?"

"I guess so. I wasn't watching the clock."

"This man's story is that a young chap hailed him and he stopped to pick him up. Said he looked about twenty or twenty-one, not tall, skinny, wearing jeans and a leather jacket. That matches your description, as much as you could give us."

"He was smaller than I," Charles agreed. "I remember at the time thinking that was good luck."

"Our witness says the young man was very nervous, talked about having to get out of town in a hurry. He also told us there was a long scratch down the left side of his face that looked as if it might have been made by a fingernail."

"A scratch? Yes, of course!" For the first time Charles felt a renewal of life. Remember carefully now, he told himself. Remember how it was. He had dived at the stranger, his fingers had clutched at his face. "I could have scratched him. I must have scratched him. And it was with my right hand, the side where I hadn't been shot, so it would be his left cheek. Your man's telling the truth. He saw the prowler, gave him a ride, he can prove my story. Oh, my God, it's going to be all right!"

"I think so," the lawyer said more temperately. "I think this is the link we need."

Charles had a week of soaring spirits. Their thudding drop on the

seventh day was almost unendurable. The judge had appraised the new evidence, and decided it did not justify a new trial; the governor had also been unmoved by it.

"But that's impossible," Charles cried. "We've an eyewitness who backs up my story. They've *got* to believe him! Why would he lie to help me?"

"For the reward," the lawyer answered. "Unfortunately, our witness has a very bad record. He's served two terms for receiving stolen property, and been convicted once of perjury. The way the judge and governor see it, he'd swear to anything for a thousand dollars. Even if he had come forward before the trial, I don't think he'd have been much help to your case."

"But he *saw* the man," Charles insisted. "At least, he can furnish a lead on where he went."

"He dropped him at the railroad station. Nobody there remembers seeing him, which isn't surprising. He could have taken a train in either direction. Or he could have walked a few blocks to the bus depot and left town that way. There just aren't any more leads—not a single one."

"No," Charles said dully, "I guess I shouldn't have expected anything. But wouldn't you have thought that when a witness did turn up, he'd be a man whose word was worth something? Everything has gone wrong. I haven't had one good break, not one."

From then on it was a matter of marking time, of waiting for it to be over.

Constantly his mind went back to the beginning when it had all appeared so simple and so safe. He'd been standing at the window looking at the footprints in the snow, getting used to the idea of his wife's death. He'd turned back into the room and taken a few steps toward the phone.

"Is he gone?" Helen's voice had cut sharply through the dark. "Did you let him get away?"

"Yes, he's gone. I thought he'd killed you."

"I must have ducked just as he fired. It was close—but not close enough." She reached out to click on the bedside lamp. In its glow her smile taunted him. "Disappointed? Were you already counting your chickens, the ones you and that little tart could hatch? If only he'd been a better marksman, it would have made it so easy for you."

"Yes," he'd agreed quietly, "it would have made it so easy."

Somewhere out there, he'd thought, is a man who brought this gun here and fired it at Helen. When they find him and tell him she's dead, he won't be able to deny he killed her.

Slowly Charles had raised the gun and taken careful aim. He had watched her expression change from mockery to unbelief to fear. Then, as a scream formed on her lips, he had pulled the trigger.

As a theme for crime and punishment, philately has not suffered from excessive use. Perhaps the earliest appearance of stamp collecting as the background for a detective story (or one of the earliest appearances) was the first Ellery Queen short story, "The One-Penny Black," published in 1933. Perhaps the earliest use of stamp collecting in a novel was Ellery Queen's THE CHINESE ORANGE MYSTERY, first published in 1934, and still miraculously in print in editions all over the world.

But certainly philately has not been overworked—we recall that Maurice Leblanc, Hugh Pentecost, and Thomas Narcejac devised plots involving postage stamps. So it is a particular pleasure to bring you a relatively "unknown" novelette by Cornell Woolrich which has, as its proximate cause of crime and detection, a fabulous "scrap of colored paper."

Further comment after you have read the story . . .

THE CAPE TRIANGULAR

by CORNELL WOOLRICH

MURRAY HOBART WAS SITTING IN his den under a shaded light, gazing through a magnifying glass at a small flat object held up by his other hand with a tiny pair of tweezers, when someone knocked at the door. He put down the tweezers first, with infinite care, then the glass, and then he got up with an air of great annoyance, strode over to the door, and unlocked it.

"Well?" he scowled. "Is the house on fire? If it's anything less than that, I'll have you—"

The servant said apologetically, "I know, Mr. Hobart. I told him you were working on your stamp

collection and couldn't be disturbed, but—"

"Who is it?"

"It's an Inspector Foster on the wire, sir."

"I don't know any Foster," snapped his employer. "Get rid of him. Tell him I'm not—" He gestured. "Wait a minute. Inspector, did you say? Inspector of what?"

"I—I don't know, sir. I think he said Homicide Bureau."

Hobart felt his chin. "Police department, eh? That's unusual." He took an extra twist in the cord of his dressing gown. "I'll talk to him," he said, and stepped out

through the doorway. Before moving away, however, he transferred the key to the outside and locked the door. Then he went down the paneled hall to the telephone.

The manservant, with a sullen scowl at the insulting precautions his employer had just taken, went on about his business. His lips moved sneeringly. "Little colored pieces of paper," he breathed contemptuously.

Hobart, at the phone, stood in such a position that he commanded a full view of the door he had just come from.

"This is Murray Hobart," he said.

Inspector Foster introduced himself. Then, "I was wondering," he said, with a hesitancy of a man asking a favor, "if we could trouble you for a little expert advice. I understand you're a specialist in this particular field, and I was wondering if you'd be good enough to give us the benefit of your opinion."

Hobart kept his eyes on the room door, as though he wished he could go back inside to resume his work. "Brokerage?" he said shortly. "That's my occupation."

The Inspector laughed disarmingly. "No, no. I mean, your hobby—postage stamps."

"Oh." But the change that came over Hobart was almost miraculous. His eyes lit up, his voice took on life, and for the first time he became interested.

"How did you happen to hear of me?" he asked.

"Well, you see, we're—by that I mean the Bureau—is on a case, and there's an angle to it that has us stumped. It's a little over our heads. We're none of us qualified to give an opinion. We're not authorities in the matter, you understand. It would mean a trip to New York, to some big stamp dealer, to clear it up, and that would take days. I wired the head of one such firm, to find out if there was any possibility of getting the information we need without the trouble of sending someone there personally—by means of photostats, for instance—and he wired back and mentioned your name. He said he'd been supplying you for years and you were right here in the same town with us."

"Well, if it has anything to do with stamps," agreed Hobart, not bragging but with the air of a man stating a simple fact, "I don't believe there's anyone in town who can tell you more about them than I can. What is it you'd like cleared up?"

"I'm afraid you'd have to examine the evidence personally to be able to pass an opinion on it."

"Yes, in the case of stamps I think that's always necessary. Particularly if it's a question of detecting a forgery."

"I'm afraid it's a little more gruesome than that," the Inspector said apologetically. "It's a murder case, and it's important for us to know —"

"Stupid of me," interrupted Hobart. "Homicide Squad. It would be, of course. Where is it you want me to go—down to headquarters?"

"No, if it wouldn't be asking too much, could you come out to 215 Rainier for a short while? I'll send a police car for you if you like."

"Thanks, but that won't be necessary. I'll drive out in my own car."

The Inspector's voice became almost effusive in his gratitude.

"Thanks, Mr. Hobart. We'd appreciate your cooperation a lot."

"Not at all. I'm very interested myself in finding out what this is all about," Hobart assured him. "I'll be there almost directly."

"Think you can find it all right?" The Inspector repeated the address.

"I'm sure I won't have any trouble." Hobart hung up, went back into his den. It took him less than five minutes to put away the paraphernalia of his hobby. A wall safe figured in this.

When he came out again, locking the door after him and pocketing the key, he had exchanged his dressing gown for the jacket of his suit. He called to the servant for his hat and coat.

"Don't bother waiting up."

"Yes, sir. Good night, Mr. Hobart." The man closed the front door after him respectfully, then grimaced savagely. "Him and his colored scraps o' paper! Locking 'em up like they was diamonds!"

Hobart reached his objective in about twenty minutes, going at a rather fast clip. The thoroughfare was wide but rather shabby-looking. It seemed to him to be just the kind of street on which murder was apt to strike. He coursed along it slowly, scanning the door numbers.

The curb before 215 Rainier Street, when he finally found it, was empty, and there was no sign of any undue excitement or activity on the premises. He braked, got out, and rang the doorbell. A pugnacious-looking woman in sweater and apron looked out at him.

"Tell Inspector Foster that Mr. Hobart's here," he said.

She tightened her grip on the door. "There's no Foster lives here," she said surlily.

Hobart's jaw dropped in surprise and annoyance. He took a step back, verified the number beside the door, came in again. "But this is 215 Rainier Street, isn't it? I'm sure I heard him right. He repeated it twice."

"Yeah, this is 215 Rainier Street, but there's no Foster here and never has been. I been living in this house five years and I ought to know. Somebody's been kidding you." Congenitally suspicious, she shifted the burden of responsibility to her husband's shoulders, though Hobart had made no move to force his way in. "Max, come here a minute, talk to him, will ya?"

The man of the house, as is often the case, was a little less hostile, but

no more helpful than she had been. "No," he said in answer to Hobart's perplexed question, "nobody along this street has called the police in. There ain't no trouble around here, as far as I know."

Hobart shook his head. "A fine thing, dragging me out of the house on a fool's errand like this! It couldn't have been a practical joke, because I don't know anyone who would—" He broke off. "May I use your phone a minute? I'll pay you for the call. Maybe I can reach him through headquarters."

The man looked a little embarrassed, but refused. "You better try a drug store."

Hobart, who could have bought the whole house and the ground it stood on out of his cigarette money, turned away fuming and strode back to his car. Before he could start off, however, the door reopened and the man called out to him:

"Hey! I just thought of it! Are you sure he said *street*—Rainier Street?"

He hadn't, now that Hobart thought of it. He'd just said Rainier.

"Because I just remembered, there's a Rainier Parkway too, 'way out on the other side of town. Our mail gets mixed up sometimes. He might of meant that."

He gave Hobart a few sketchy directions, and later on Hobart amplified them from another motorist. His annoyance evaporated before

long. As long as he was out and in the car, it seemed childish not to try his luck at the second address before turning home.

But the twenty minutes had nearly tripled themselves before he finally reached his new destination. This Parkway ran through a far superior residential section than had the first. All the residences along it were set in ample grounds. Some of the estates comprised entire square blocks. Two-fifteen was among the latter.

It was a house a good deal like his own, but on an even larger scale. There were two cars standing in front of it, and when he went up the walk a heretofore invisible figure detached itself from behind one of the veranda columns and became a uniformed patrolman barring his way.

"An Inspector Foster in there?" asked Hobart.

"Oh, yeah? You Mr. Hobart? He's waiting for you. Go right in."

The hallway was lighted but empty. Up above somewhere, at the top of a spacious, curving white-painted staircase, came a sound of feminine sobbing pitched in a low, exhausted key, as though it had been going on for hours.

He turned in at the brightly lighted, double doorway ahead, and entered a room where there were three men. One was busy at a large open secretary reading through a stack of old correspondence. A second was seated at a table, with a

number of thick albums before him. They were gilt-edged, with expensive hand-tooled leather bindings and the initials *A.H.* embossed on each. He was slowly turning the pages of one with the perfectly blank look of a man looking at something he doesn't understand. The third man was doing nothing but sitting in an easy car, smoking, with his legs crossed, as though waiting for something.

Hobart said, "Inspector Foster?" to the man engaged with the stamp albums.

The idler in the chair, who was younger and far less identifiable as a police officer, got up and came toward him. "I'm Foster. We were just beginning to wonder whether —"

Hobart said, clasping the offered hand, "Sorry I took so long, but I went to the wrong address first. I darned near gave up then and there."

Foster looked genuinely remorseful. "I wouldn't have had that happen for the world! We did the same thing ourselves last night when we first answered the call. I should have been more explicit, but we've been working like dogs all day and I guess in my hurry it slipped my mind."

"That when it happened, last night?"

"Yes, sometime between nine and midnight." Foster introduced his two teammates. "This is Broderick, and this is Timmins, Mr. Hobart.

Sit down, won't you? Now first I'd better tell you what we've gotten so far." At this point, Hobart noticed, the one called Broderick curved his index finger around so that it met the point of his thumb, evidently suggesting a zero. Foster went on. "This man Aaron Harding—"

"That the murdered party?" Hobart hadn't even known whose house he was in until now.

"Yes, a very wealthy man. Realtor by profession and, like yourself, an ardent stamp collector on the side. As a matter of fact, his collecting activities were taking up more of his time than his legitimate business. He was getting on in years, had made his pile two or three times over, and figured he was entitled to a little relaxation, I suppose. That's neither here nor there. He was a widower and lived here alone with just a couple, man and wife, cook and chauffeur. Well, they had some meeting or whatnot to go to last night, and he gave them both the night off, and stayed here alone. When they left at nine he was sitting in this same chair you're in now."

Foster went on: "He had his stamp books spread out around him. When they came back at twelve and the woman looked in to see if he'd like any refreshment, he was still in the same chair, stamp books spread out around him, but —he'd been smothered to death by a handkerchief pressed tight over his mouth and nose until his heart

had stopped beating. We figured that from bits of lint found on his lips and nostrils."

"Shouldn't the handkerchief give you a clue?" Hobart ventured. "I've heard you people are very clever about things like—"

"It was his own," said the detective ruefully. "Here's how we've reconstructed it, with the little we have to go by. He admitted the person himself. He must have. There are no signs of forcible entry anywhere around the house. We don't believe the person was known to him by sight, and we're positive he wasn't expected. Harding would have mentioned he was coming to the servants, and he didn't. But this man somehow gained Harding's confidence out there at the door and was led in here to view the collection. Possibly he pretended to have stamps to offer for sale.

"The old man reseated himself, sneezed as he did so, from the effects of going to the open door the way he just had, took out his handkerchief, and the other stepped quickly behind him, applied pressure, and kept on applying pressure until the old man was suffocated. Then the intruder left, without taking anything, without disturbing anything, without leaving a clue behind. No fingerprints on anything—tabletop, chair, doorknob, or the covers of the albums themselves."

"That's a tough baby, all right," admitted Hobart.

"You're telling us?" said Foster. "We've been working on it twenty-four hours, and we've gotten exactly nowhere. We've got to get our teeth into a motive before we *can* get anywhere. Before we can begin to make even faint motions of looking for our suspect. He came, killed, and went—unseen by the human eye. He wasn't just a marauder or burglar, because there's not a penny in cash missing.

"It wasn't anyone who had a grudge, who felt personal enmity toward him. We've checked back twenty years or more and can turn up absolutely nothing that by any stretch of the imagination could have created ill will toward him. He's never discharged any servants, because he's never had any but the two he has now. His chauffeur never ran over anyone or so much as barked anyone's shins. He's never made any deals in real estate at the expense of any of his competitors. He dealt in the development of new tracts, out beyond the city limits—virgin parcels, so to speak.

"It's not an inside job either. The two servants have been with him for years. Old retainer stuff. Harding didn't leave any will—no motive there. On the contrary, afraid he'd outlive them or that they'd be insufficiently provided for when he passed on, the servants were both getting a pension *during* his lifetime. It's *now* that it stops."

"I thought I heard a woman sobbing upstairs," Hobart said.

"Yes—that's his only living relative, his married daughter."

Hobart didn't say anything further, but Foster read his thought. "She took a plane out from Chicago at nine this morning for the funeral. No possible personal gain motive involved, to be blunt about it. D'you know who she's married to? Adams of the Electric Corporation of America. Her husband's one of the twenty wealthiest men in the country. If the old man was well off, she's practically a mint walking around on high heels. Nor did Harding carry a cent of insurance either—old-fashioned duck evidently. So it's completely an outside job if there ever was one. That gets us back to the point I made before. Not a red dime, not a silver spoon missing from the house."

Foster pointed a finger at Hobart, to fasten down his attention even more securely. "Now. Here's where you can come in handy for us. It's occurred to us that robbery may have been the motive after all, but not cash or valuables." He pointed to the weighty volumes on the table. "We've been over those albums not once but several times, and we're still in the dark; although there are plenty of blank spaces—

"We can't tell whether the ones that aren't there were taken from the collection, or never were in it in the first place. Nor can we tell whether they're valuable—valuable enough to commit murder for—or

unimportant. Don't you see what it'll mean? If you can dig up the motive from inside that stamp collection, look what an angle that gives us!

"That narrows us down to a suspect who owns a stamp collection himself, who knew Harding owned one and finally, if you can tell us something valuable is missing, we can watch for it to turn up. We can tip off the various stamp dealers in New York, just as though it were a piece of hot jewelry. Otherwise we're up against a completely motiveless case, and that means—no soap. D'you think you can help us out on this, Mr. Hobart?"

"I'm pretty sure I can. If he had any system at all to his collecting, I think I can tell you the things you want to know." He drew his chair closer to the table, slipped the knot of his necktie. "You say the stamp books were spread out around him when he was found. Were they open or closed?"

"Those two were closed, standing one atop the other. This third one was open on the table before him."

"What page, can you tell me?"

It was now Foster's turn to look a little self-satisfied. "You bet I can! I may not know anything about stamps, but it's my job to notice any little thing like that. It's where I left that little strip of paper sticking out for a marker."

Hobart reopened it to that page. "Cape of Good Hope," he mur-

mured, reading the printed title of the country at the top.

"Look at that whole row of blank frames across there. What about them?" Foster prompted hopefully, spearing his finger out. "Don't it look like—?"

"Look out! Don't prod them with your nails! Stamps are very fragile things," Hobart warned. "Hand me that glass."

He peered through it briefly, announced authoritatively, "Those are stamps he never had. I'm going to give you one pointer, before we go any further—something you evidently don't know. Collectors don't lick stamps and paste them down flat on the face of the album, like people do when they're mailing a letter. D'you know how it's done?"

Their three heads shook.

"By means of hinges. Little tabs of paper, gummed on one side only. They peel off very easily. You just *draw* the stamp off without damaging it. Now. He never had any stamps in this row of frames, because the hinges would have left little patches of dullness on the album paper. I'm looking at it through the glass and the surface gloss of the paper is unmarred.

"He had a beautiful collection," said Hobart wistfully. "He must have been at it for years. Funny I never heard of him, living in the same town. I guess we both dealt with out-of-town companies. There aren't any dealers here, as far as I—"

He broke off suddenly as he

turned the page. He was staring fixedly at something. He just sat there rigid, as if turned to stone.

"What's the matter?" breathed Foster anxiously. "Anything wrong? Did you find something?"

But there were no blank spaces on this one at all. Every frame was filled.

"Well, what is it?" they asked. "What'd you find?"

Their untrained eyes peered at the page and showed no understanding. If they'd been watching Hobart's left hand instead, which was resting open on his thigh just below the table, they would have seen it contract into a tight knot.

Foster said, "Why, there's nothing gone from that page. Every space is filled!"

"That's just it. Every space is filled," nodded Hobart. "Gentlemen," he said slowly, turning to look up at them, "you asked me to come here and help you. I think I can tell you what you want to know without looking any further. On this page, staring up at you from the midst of all its companions, is one of the most valuable stamps in the world."

"Which one is it?"

"To your eyes one doesn't look much different from the others," said Hobart. "Well, it's the Cape of Good Hope triangular, this three-sided one right here. Did he own a catalogue? He must have. Let me have it a minute. I'll show you what Scott's quotes it at."

He opened the stamp collector's bible, which gives the description and catalogue value of every stamp issued anywhere in the world, and he read aloud, "One hundred and fifty thousand dollars."

The three detectives nearly fell over. "Are you kidding?" one said. "For *that*, for that little colored piece of paper?"

"That figure is only hypothetical," Hobart went on. "That's what it would bring if it were available. That's what it brought the last time it changed hands. As it is, it's priceless, because there are only three of them known to be in existence. One is in the collection of the late King George, one belonged to the late Czar, and one was in the Ferrari collection, which was sold at auction behind closed doors in Paris about fifteen years ago. This may be either one of those last two—if it's genuine and not a fake. There are a number of fakes floating around." His jaw set in a grim, bitter line. "I know of more than one unsuspecting collector who has been stung with them by unscrupulous dealers, who rented an entire establishment for a 'front,' filled it with dummy stock, just for the sake of making this one larcenous transaction, then vanished in time to escape prosecution."

"Well, which is that one—the McCoy or a counterfeit?" Foster asked eagerly. "Can you tell?"

"No, I can't," said Hobart irritably, as though the sight of such a

treasure had made him discontented. "Not just looking at it with the naked eye, or through a glass either. It needs a watermark detector." He stopped their torrent of further questions with an impatient lift of his hand. "From your point of view its continued presence in the album can mean only one thing. That the stamps played no part in the murder, their theft wasn't the motive, and the murderer was *not* a stamp collector. You can bet your lives he wasn't! He certainly wouldn't have left that fabulous stamp undisturbed if it had been."

"Unless," Foster suggested, "it really is a fake, and he only saw that after he croaked the old guy, and then didn't bother taking it after all."

"He couldn't tell by just looking at it," Hobart insisted. "I don't care who he was. If I can't, he couldn't have, either! He'd have had to take it out and put it in a watermark detector before he could make sure, and it hasn't been taken out of the album."

Foster wouldn't give in. "Fair enough as far as it goes," he said, "but you're not using psychology, and that brings us back onto my ground again. Look at it this way. If there are only three of them, as you say, how can anyone taking it possibly hope to get rid of it afterwards—unload it without creating an uproar in stamp circles? Don't you see? It's *too* rare, *too* easily identifi-

able. It'd be like heisting the Venus de Milo or the Hope diamond. He was no fool, whoever he was. Don't you think it's likely he realized that this thing would be a white elephant? Isn't it possible he purposely left it there because its possession would have branded him, and instead helped himself to a lot of less valuable stamps from other parts of the collection? Stamps whose ownership would be harder to trace, stamps that would bring him plenty of money without the risk of detection? I don't think you've given us our answer yet. Not until you've gone over that collection from A to Z and told us definitely whether anything *is* missing from it."

Hobart glanced once more at the tiny pyramid-shaped piece of paper lying there on the page. He seemed to make up his mind abruptly, as though the stamp had exerted some sort of magnetism on him.

"I'll do it," he said. He drew his chair in again. "I'll start in alphabetically and work my way through the albums country by country. That's the only way." He pointed to the catalogue. "Do you see those little pencil checks next to a great many of the listings? That probably means he had those items. That's the way most collectors keep a record of what they own. I do it myself. It's simply a routine matter of verifying the catalogue checks by what's in the album."

"Oh, well, if that's all there is to it,

one of us could do it. There's no reason why you should," Foster suggested.

Hesitant as he had been before, Hobart now seemed anxious for the chore. "I can do it about three times as quickly, because I'm familiar with the stamps at sight. You people would have to pore over the color of each one and the date of issue and all that; I can identify at a glance. Besides, it's no tiresome task. I'll enjoy it even though they're somebody else's stamps. It's my hobby. I think I can work over the whole collection in about two sittings."

He took off his coat, polished up the magnifying glass, and got busy. They watched him fascinatedly for a few minutes, but the novelty quickly wore off. All he did was simply go down the line of pencil checks in the catalogue with one finger, swiveling a pencil back and forth between catalogue and album, occasionally bringing the glass into play to inspect something more closely. Their interest quickly waned, and after all they had their own work to attend to.

Foster, the last to leave the room, said, "Tell you what. You holler if you come across anything missing. I got a little more questioning to do upstairs."

Hobart nodded, without looking up. Yet if he seemed oblivious of the fact that he had been left alone in the room, that was a misleading impression; he was acutely con-

scious of it, with every nerve in his body.

"Fools," he thought savagely, continuing to pore over the table-top, "leaving a stamp collector, I don't care who he is, alone and unwatched with the Cape triangular! After I *told* them what it's worth!" It was, he realized vaguely, because they didn't quite believe him. That is, consciously they did, but unconsciously they didn't. It still had no meaning to them.

He had reached Canada, the country before Cape of Good Hope, when he finally quit for the night. The last thing he did before shutting the album was to turn two pages ahead and take another look at the famous Cape triangular. A long, lingering look. A tormented look.

"Are you real," he breathed reverently, "or are you a phoney like mine?"

The only way to tell was by the watermark. The paper that sheets of stamps are printed on, before the stamps are individually separated, is often watermarked just like banknote or writing paper sometimes is. The watermark of the paper plays as important a part in the stamp's description, in Scott's catalogues and to collectors all over the world, as its color or design or denomination. The authentic Cape triangulars, issued back in the Forties of the Nineteenth Century and now all gone from the world but three, were watermarked with the

British royal crown and the initials VR, Victoria Regina.

The fakes were unwatermarked, for this official postal paper could not be obtained, and that was the only sure way of telling them apart—as Hobart had found out to his cost. An unwary collector, in the heat of acquisition, seeing a prize he had never hoped to obtain, was apt to overlook that—or had been ten or fifteen years ago, when knowledge and use of the watermark detector was not so widespread as now.

He was dying to know: had old Aaron Harding been stung just as Hobart had, or was this the genuine article? Alongside that question, the preoccupation of these three ignoramuses as to who had killed him and why seemed trivial, unimportant.

The old man had not owned a watermark detector—old-fashioned in that respect just as he had been about insurance and making a will. Hobart, as he moved the short distance from the table to the open door, made up his mind. He would bring his own over tomorrow night when he came back to continue his checking. If they left him alone in the room, the way they had tonight, he could easily take the stamp out of the album, test it in the detector, and replace it again without their being any the wiser.

On the other hand, why do it secretly, behind these men's backs? What harm would it have been to

mention openly what he wanted to do, to ask their permission? It almost certainly would have been granted him. Was it because he didn't want to attract their attention to his tremendous interest in it, put them on their guard against possible substitution? Was it because he already knew *that he meant to do more than just test it?*

He raised his voice and called from the doorway, "Foster! Inspector Foster! I'm going home now."

Foster came down to see him out.

Hobart said, "You're not going to just leave those albums lying on the table all night, are you?" They couldn't get it into their thick heads that those scraps of paper were worth all kinds of money! "Didn't he keep them in a safe or anything?"

"No, just inside the drawers of that secretary, from what the servants told me. I'll put them back and keep the key on me. But they're safe enough. There'll be a cop at the door all night, anyway."

"Sorry I haven't been able to turn up anything definite for you yet," Hobart said, "but I may come on it further along in the collection."

The remark had an insincere ring, even to his own ears. Because he knew he wasn't really interested in whether he did or not. He was only interested in having an excuse to come back the next night and find out whether or not that was a genuine Cape triangular.

Business was slow the next day.

There wasn't much trading. Well, he'd made enough money. It wasn't a matter of bread and butter any more. And that was when your spare-time hobby started to grow on you, crowd aside your full-time occupation.

He found himself thinking of that Cape triangular time and again, even when he was watching the stock ticker. Was the stamp real or wasn't it? And if it was, what good was it to a dead man?

He didn't start right over to Harding's house when he had finished his dinner that evening. He unlocked his den instead and went in to take out his own collection. It was while he was turning the dial on the wall safe that he happened to glance up into a mirror and see his manservant standing in the open doorway, looking in questioningly.

He whirled angrily, strode over to the door. "Don't come in here," he said sharply, "You know I don't let anyone in here."

"Sorry, sir. I knocked but you didn't hear me. Inspector Foster just called again, sir. He said if you hadn't left yet, to tell you he was on his way there himself and he'd stop by and call for you, if you'd care to wait for him."

This was unimportant from Hobart's point of view. He certainly had no reason for *not* wanting to ride out with the detective. In fact, it saved him the trouble of getting his own car out of the garage. It

was important only in that it gave the servant his first inkling as to what police-auxiliary business his employer was engaged in.

Hobart closed the door in his face abruptly. He went back to the wall safe, took out an album, and gazed at his own Cape triangular. He'd often wondered why, after he'd found out definitely it was spurious, he'd bothered keeping it in his collection, why he hadn't thrown it away and marked it off to experience. In the beginning, when he'd gone to the police about it (that was in New York) and they'd been trying to apprehend the swindler, he'd needed it for evidence. After that, when it became evident that the sharper had made good his escape—well, maybe the fact that Hobart had parted with \$5000 for it had something to do with his hanging onto it.

He removed the stamp now, with his tweezers. Then he brought out his watermark detector. This was simply a shallow little tray, about four by six inches, of a hard black bakelite composition. He placed the stamp in it, face down, so that the reverse showed uppermost. Then he poured a few drops of benzine over it, enough to moisten the bottom of the tray. It wasn't necessary to use this liquid; the same effect could be achieved with plain water, but benzine dries more rapidly. The soaked paper still showed completely unshadowed

against the tray's blackness—for this one was unwatermarked, this one was a forgery.

He took it out of the pan, left it on a sheet of blotting paper for the air to dry it. But then he didn't wait—he put the album back without it, locked the wall safe. It stayed there on the blotting paper as though he'd forgotten it. He hadn't. He was fighting a battle with himself, a grim battle.

Foster didn't bother to ring the doorbell when he arrived, just stayed in the car and tooted the horn. Hobart went out to him, leaving the stamp behind. He seemed to have won the battle.

He shook hands, and asked the detective hospitably, "Care to come in a minute for a drink before we go?"

Foster gave him a humorous look. "On duty? I'd like to keep my job a little longer." He opened the car door for him.

"Just a minute," Hobart said abruptly. "I forgot something." He went back into the house.

He *had* forgotten something. Something innocent. The watermark detector, with which he'd been meaning to test Harding's Cape triangular.

But when he left the den the second time, the stamp was no longer on the blotter.

(continued on page 96)

In our December 1962 issue we presented a new kind of crime-buster—a stock market detective, a specialist in industrial skuldugery. Here is the second in this unusual series—the second adventure of Michael Dane James and his “Archie Goodwin,” Ted Bennett, who are not only stock market sleuths but also industrial espionage agents. In their second case they investigate a “leak” in one of the big mutual funds . . . You say that you too are a shareholder in a mutual fund or a member of an investment club? Then you will be especially interested . . . Next, coming soon: the fascinating story of The Boy Wonder of Finance—in real estate.

THE HAPPY DAYS CLUB

by JAMES M. ULLMAN

TED, I'VE GOT ONE RIGHT UP YOUR alley,” Michael Dane James announced over the telephone.

Ted Bennett, sprawled in a chair beside a customer's man in a broker's boardroom, replied without taking his eyes from the tape moving overhead. “Mickey, if it's another scheme to drift me into a Detroit tool and die plant in the guise of a laborer, climb a tree. I don't care *what* the 1965 Whozit is going to look like.”

“It's a defensive assignment,” James said, “and won't compromise your principles one bit. One of the nation's biggest mutual funds, with assets of half a billion dollars, thinks its secrets are being stolen by a little investment club in Iowa.”

“You're kidding,” Bennett chuckled.

“I'm leveling,” James went on.

“So meet me in front of Sam's at five o'clock. Our Wall Street friends want to talk to us there before they commute home to suburbia. They don't think it would look good for us industrial spies to be seen in their offices.”

A sign in the window proclaimed *SAM'S—HOME OF THE 25-CENT MARTINI*. The price prevailed only during the cocktail hour, but as a result the place was jammed, mostly with executives from the financial district. James, a stocky man with horn-rimmed glasses riding his pug nose, and Bennett, tall, lean, and hatless, pushed through the crowd to a rear booth tagged *RESERVED FOR MR. ALLEN*.

Victor Allen, president of the Gibraltar Fund's management

group, rose to shake hands. He was big and burly and in 1934 had played tackle for the Green Bay Packers. He introduced James and Bennett to the other occupant of the booth—Stuart Clark, chairman of the fund's stock selection committee.

"Mickey and I," Allen told Clark as they sat down, "banged heads one year in the old N.F.L. We both got out alive somehow. Mickey's an industrial espionage consultant now, and Bennett works for him. Sam, a couple more here."

"Is this," Bennett inquired, settling in a corner, "where you boys decide which stocks the Gibraltar Fund will buy? Booze up and then shove a pin through the Big Board listings in *The Times*?"

"Hardly," Clark smiled. "Let's just say that here we review in more relaxed surroundings decisions made elsewhere."

"Show him the clip, Stu," Allen said.

Clark drew an envelope from his pocket and removed a newspaper clipping. He pushed it across the table. A waiter brought two drinks and set them down.

"This clipping," Clark explained, "was forwarded to us by the branch manager of a brokerage house in Des Moines, Iowa. It's a story from a small daily newspaper, the *Canfield, Iowa, Gazette*. The story is the usual feature that papers print now and then about a local investment club."

"The Happy Days Club," James read aloud, "'is composed of fifteen residents of the Westlake subdivision. Its members are drawn from all walks of life.'"

"They seem," Bennett observed, peering over James's shoulder, "to have done rather well."

"There's something remarkable about The Happy Days Club," Clark went on. "That's why my friend in Des Moines sent me the clipping. He sells a lot of shares in our fund, you see, and knows our portfolio. And he noticed in the past eight months that the Happy Days Club has been buying or selling only those stocks which *we* bought and sold."

"It could be coincidence."

"It could be," Allen broke in, "but even more remarkable is the fact that their buying and selling took place *before* we announced we had bought or sold the stocks, and in some cases, *after* we had reached a decision but *before* we had even completed a transaction. That story gives the dates of their sales and purchases and we checked them against our records. The club didn't buy every stock we bought, of course—they don't have that much money. But there's not a single stock in their list that we didn't buy. And not a single stock we sold that, if they owned it, they didn't sell."

"Secrecy," Clark added, "is essential at a certain stage in our business, Mr. James. We're required to

report quarterly on our purchases and sales. But we're allowed enough leeway so that we don't have to report on the transactions we're making *at that time*. Our minimum investment in any stock is about two million dollars. Naturally, we don't go into the market and buy two million dollars' worth of stock in one day—the purchase, or sale, is spread out over a period of weeks or months. The brokers we buy through are carefully screened for their ability to keep their mouths shut about what we're doing. Because if word got out that we were putting two million dollars or more into a company a lot of speculators would buy the stock, too, hoping for a killing."

"Secrecy isn't as much of a consideration," Allen explained, "when we buy widely held blue chips like AT&T or Jersey Standard. But it's a prime consideration when we buy into a lesser-known company which we think may become a blue chip in the future. And it's that class of stock, incidentally, which The Happy Days Club has been buying into with us."

"So you believe," Bennett said, "that The Happy Days Club has a pipeline into the innermost circles of the Gibraltar Fund."

"Exactly," Clark said. "We're not so concerned that these fifteen Iowans are stealing our judgment, so to speak, as we are with the fact there is a leak in our organization. If word of our decisions

reaches many people before we announce them, the price of every smaller company we start buying into will be bid up to the moon. What's more, we're one of the big funds in the country. If the story ever got out that a little investment club was able to steal information from us, we'd be held up to public ridicule. Someone might even investigate us. You know how things are these days."

James fingered the clipping. "Any of these names—the fifteen club members—strike a responsive chord?"

"None whatsoever."

"Well," James concluded, "I'd say the way to begin would be for Bennett, here, to go right to the source and find out how The Happy Days Club arrives at their decisions. Meanwhile, I'll have Barney, my sound man, see if your phones are being tapped or anything. And I'll run a check on the backgrounds of everyone involved in your stock transactions."

"We don't want to alarm those people in Iowa," Allen said.

"Don't worry," Bennett said. "Bennett will appear in appropriate disguise."

A day later Bennett flew to Chicago, took another plane to Davenport, and then rented a car. He drove south along the Mississippi, reaching Canfield, a river town of some 20,000 population, as dusk fell. He checked in at a motel,

wolfed a paper plate of fried chicken at a drive-in, and returned to his room for a good night's sleep.

In the morning he drove to downtown Canfield. He breakfasted on tomato juice and toast, stopped at a news agency for a *Wall Street Journal*, and then, *Journal* and an attaché case in hand, entered the offices of the Canfield Savings and Loan Association. The newspaper clipping had identified the president of The Happy Days Club as Robert Gordon, a loan officer at the institution.

Gordon, a genial, portly man in his fifties, greeted Bennett with a puzzled smile.

"You say you're from New York? Are you buying real estate in our town, Mr. Bennett?"

"No," Bennett said, shaking Gordon's hand and taking a chair, "I'm a writer. Free-lance. I'm working up a magazine piece on investment clubs."

"You've come a long way for that."

"I know," Bennett explained, "but that's the point. I want to get away from the usual slick big-city and fancy suburban crowd—advertising men and sales executives and all that. I want a good part of my article to deal with the way an investment club works in small-town America, the folks right across the street." He pulled a photostat of the clipping from his pocket. "I've had a clipping service send me ev-

erything they could find on small-town investment clubs. And as soon as I read about The Happy Days Club in the *Gazette*, I knew it was the club I wanted to feature in my article."

"I'm flattered," Gordon said. "I'm sure the whole club will be flattered. In what magazine will your story appear?"

"I have a tentative commission from the editors of *View*," Bennett said, handing Gordon a faked letter written on *View* stationery. "But if they decide they don't want it, I don't expect to have much trouble selling it elsewhere."

"Will there be pictures?"

"Of course. I have my camera at my motel."

"Well, won't that be nice," Gordon said, beaming and returning the faked letter. "Tell you what. Meet me for lunch at the American Café around the corner. Meanwhile, I'll phone the members and try to set up a special meeting as soon as possible."

Bennett walked to the Canfield *Gazette* building. He told the managing editor the same story he had told Gordon and got permission to use the newspaper's library for background material on the club and its members.

He spent two hours going over the *Gazette's* clipping files. When at last he left the building, a police car slowly followed him around the corner and down the block to the

American Café. Bennett tried without much success to pretend it wasn't there.

"All our members have been contacted," Gordon announced over coffee. "Most of them can make it at my house tomorrow night. They'll be there at eight. But I wish you'd drop in tonight and have dinner with my family."

"Delighted," Bennett said. "By the way, who makes the buying and selling decisions for your club?"

"We have a three-man selection committee—Cromie, Hubbard, and Price. When anyone has a suggestion for a stock to buy or a reason to sell a stock we hold, it's forwarded to the committee. When we were first organized, the whole membership used to vote on what purchases or sales to make. But recently we've let the committee make the actual decisions, since they say timing may be important."

"Who's chairman of the committee?"

"We have no chairman. Just the three men. But the selections they've been making lately have been doing so well that we haven't changed members of the committee in nearly a year. Before that we had an awful lot of losers."

Bennett had almost reached his car when the police car pulled up behind him and stopped. A tall, husky man in uniform emerged.

"Sir," the officer said cordially, "would you mind coming with us?"

"What's the trouble?"

"No trouble. The Chief wants a word with you."

Bennett shrugged and climbed into the back of the police car. He flipped through his *Wall Street Journal* as they rode to the station in silence.

The Chief of Police, a huge, crew-cut man of about Bennett's age, late thirties, smiled and nodded toward a chair.

"Sit down, Mr. Bennett. I understand you're a writer."

"That's correct," Bennett said. He put his attaché case and the *Journal* on a radiator under the window and sat down. Inwardly, he debated whether to volunteer to show the Chief the faked *View* letter. Something about the Chief made him decide not to.

"What magazine do you write for?"

"I may do this story for *View*."

"Would you mind naming some other magazines where your work has appeared?"

Bennett rattled off the names of several nationally circulated publications. He felt much as he had one day in 1944, when a German officer asked why a French farm laborer who stubbed a toe should know so many American obscenities. That had been a bad day too.

The Chief wrote the names on a pad. "I don't suppose you'd mind,"

the Chief asked, "if we checked these out."

"Not at all," Bennett replied. "And now I'd like to know why you've taken such a sudden interest in me."

"Well, it's funny," the Chief explained, "but a lot of people from the big city think we're kind of slow out here. They try to sell our citizens traps for mortar mice and all sorts of things. And this morning one of our citizens called me and said there was a man in town from *View* who wanted to meet the members of The Happy Days Club. He said he was suspicious because he'd heard of confidence men approaching investment clubs in one disguise or another, for the very good reason that people in investment clubs have money to invest. He didn't say *you* were a confidence man, understand. He just asked us to check and make sure you're a writer."

"Who was this caller?"

"I'd rather not tell you."

"You asked me in here on the basis of that?"

"Not entirely," the Chief said. "We've had writers around here before, Mr. Bennett. A year ago, when a farmer outside of town chopped up two mail-order brides and buried them in an onion patch, a lot of writers came down. I called one of those boys—he works out of New York too—and he said he never heard of you. So far nobody else he's asked ever heard of you either

—including, by the way, the editor of *View*. And the librarian here has been going through the *Reader's Guide* and she can't find any record of where you ever had anything published. Maybe if you'd tell me the dates where some of your stuff ran, she could look it up, and we could both forget the whole thing."

"At the moment," Bennett said blandly, "I just don't remember."

The Chief considered this. "Well, that's too bad," he said. "Now, you haven't done anything illegal I know of yet, so I can't charge you and put you in jail. Your name is Theodore Bennett—we know because you showed identification when you rented that car in Davenport. We checked. We're great respecters of the law out here. We don't push people around because they're strangers. But the way it is, though, I'm afraid there'll be a squad car or a police officer at your elbow every second you're inside the city limits until I'm satisfied you *are* a writer. So if you want to operate under those conditions, you go right ahead."

Bennett managed a weak grin. "Well," he said, "I'm not going to argue. It's ridiculous. But on the other hand, I'm not going to waste my time giving Canfield and The Happy Days Club national publicity if this is the treatment I receive here." He rose. "I saw a pay phone near the sergeant's desk on my way in. I'll telephone Gordon and call the whole thing off."

"Use my phone."

"Wouldn't think of it. I don't want to waste a cent of your taxpayers' money."

Bennett left the Chief's office. He fumbled clumsily through a telephone book for Gordon's number, taking plenty of time. Then he called Gordon and abruptly informed him he was leaving town and wouldn't write a story about The Happy Days Club after all. He hung up, leaving Gordon in mid-sentence, and returned to the Chief's office for his attaché case and *Wall Street Journal*.

"A couple of my boys," the Chief said genially, "will go with you to your motel and see to it you get packed proper and on the right road back to Davenport. If you drive fast, you might reach there before dark."

Two uniformed officers drove Bennett to where he had parked the rented car, then followed him to the motel. Bennett packed in five minutes and checked out. They stayed with him to the city limits, pulling to the curb and watching as Bennett gunned the motor and roared out of sight over a hill.

Bennett drove at high speed for about five miles. In the future, he vowed, he'd provide himself with a solid cover story and appropriate supporting documents no matter how innocuous the assignment seemed. Apparently he had vastly underestimated the sophistication

of Iowa investment clubs—and of the Iowa police.

When Bennett came to a strip of roadside stores and drive-ins he bounced to a stop in a gravel parking area. He hauled his attaché case from the back seat and opened it, exposing a transistorized tape recorder built into the bottom. Bennett had activated the recorder just before placing the attaché case on the radiator in the Chief's office. No matter how the conversation went, it had seemed a good idea.

Quickly Bennett reversed the tape, pushed the playback button, and lit a cigarette, listening to a recording of their conversation, to the point where the Chief had said, "Use my phone."

"Wouldn't think of it. I don't want to waste a cent of your taxpayers' money."

Then he heard the door close as he left the Chief's office to telephone Gordon. And then the Chief did what Bennett had hoped he would do. He picked up his own telephone and dialed a number.

"Hello. Mrs. Price? Chief Waner. Your husband home? Hello, Frank. You were right. He must be some kind of swindler, although I never heard of this investment club approach before. But he sure isn't a writer. Don't worry. We had a little talk and he's leaving Canfield this afternoon. He seemed sensible enough not to try to come back. Thanks. Glad you put me on to this guy before he did any damage."

The Chief hung up.

Frank Price, Bennett knew without having to check his list, was a member of The Happy Days Club. What's more, he was one of the three men on the stock selection committee.

Bennett turned the recorder off and looked around. What he needed now was a woman.

He found her behind a counter in a diner. She was reasonably articulate and, from the way she talked back to truck drivers, she seemed to have plenty of nerve. Bennett had to drink two cups of coffee before the place cleared out and he was alone with her. The cook in the back was engrossed in a telecast of a baseball game.

"Miss," Bennett asked, "can you dial Canfield direct on that pay phone?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well," Bennett said, "I'll give you twenty bucks if you make a call for me. It will take you less than five minutes."

"You're crazy," she said.

He pulled twenty dollars from his wallet and pushed it across the counter. "There it is. No fooling. In fact, I'll make it thirty." He extracted another ten.

"I don't want to get in trouble," the girl said.

"You won't."

"Why don't you call?"

"Because I want someone to impersonate a telephone operator."

"That sounds illegal." She advanced and fingered the bills.

"It is a little illegal," Bennett admitted, "but there'll be no risk for you. You've heard of private investigators, haven't you? I can't tell you any more than that. But if you make the call and hang up, nobody will be able to trace it. And even if they did trace it, you could always say some woman came into the diner and used the phone."

"What do you want me to say?"

"Say, 'This is the long-distance operator. The charge on your call to San Diego is twenty-eight dollars and nineteen cents.' I have reason to believe this party just made a long-distance call, although probably not to San Diego. The party will probably be so mad at you that he'll volunteer information about any long-distance calls he did make this afternoon. If he doesn't, ask him if he made any long-distance calls, and to where. Get the out-of-town number if you possibly can. If you can't get any information after a minute or two, say 'This is Albany 4-5634, isn't it?' He'll say no, because his number is Albany 4-5624. Then say you're sorry you made the error and hang up."

"Albany 4-5624," she repeated, reaching for the thirty dollars. "Okay, hon. I'll go along. Got a dime?"

Twenty minutes later Bennett climbed into his car and drove to the next river town. There he

turned right and crossed a bridge over the Mississippi into Illinois. The road wound down the river's foothills and then flattened out into farm country. It was dark when Bennett checked in at an eight-unit motel in a tiny junction called Blackford.

There was a telephone booth in the parking lot and Bennett called James from there.

"Where've you been?" James demanded. In the background, the roar of guns from a television set mingled with youthful screams. "I got a pack of Cub Scouts in my living room and can hardly hear you."

"I got chased out of Canfield," Bennett reported, "by the Chief of Police. He knows I'm not a writer and he thinks I'm a confidence man."

"Some industrial espionage agent you are," James said sarcastically. "What happened? Your false mustache fall off?"

"Wait a minute," Bennett said. "The Chief didn't think this up on his own. He was tipped by a club member named Frank Price. Frank Price is also a member of a three-man committee that decides what stocks the club will buy and sell."

A moment of silence ensued.

"Are you thinking," James asked slowly, "what I'm thinking?"

"It occurred to me at the time," Bennett said, "but I figured it was just one chance in a million."

"Well, the odds are shortening. I'll have Barney work on that angle

first thing tomorrow. Where are you now?"

"Blackford, Illinois. I'm going to sack in here tonight."

"You'll never get back to New York the route you're taking. Drive to some place with an airport and catch a plane. I'll send another agent to Canfield with a better cover."

"I'm at Blackford because I had a girl call Price to find out if he placed any long-distance calls after I was run out of town. She pretended to be a long-distance operator. And Price did make a long-distance call this afternoon. To Eaton, Illinois, which is twelve miles from Blackford."

"It's probably a waste of time."

"Maybe. The girl couldn't get the Eaton number that Price called. But Price has a brother, William, who lives in Eaton. I learned that from some social notes about him in the *Canfield Gazette* morgue. It will only take a day to check the brother out and see if he has any connection with the Gibraltar Fund."

"Since you're there anyhow, go ahead. I'll hold up on that other agent. Come to think of it, Price called that Chief of Police so fast when he heard you were in town it's like someone pushed a button. He must have known you were coming. I got a hunch that by this time tomorrow we'll both have arrived at the same conclusion."

In the morning Bennett drove to

Eaton and parked on a side street. He walked a block to the business district, entered a drug store, bought a *Wall Street Journal*, and stepped into a telephone booth. He flipped through the book to PRICE, WILLIAM J. and dialed the number.

A woman answered.

"Good morning," Bennett said. "Is your husband there?"

"He's asleep. He's always sleeping at this hour. He doesn't get in until three."

"When can I reach him?"

"Who is this?"

"I represent a firm doing market research for an advertising agency in Peoria. We're surveying all property owners in Eaton."

"Well," she said irritably, "why don't you get him at work, then? He doesn't like to be bothered at home. Call him at the restaurant this afternoon."

"What restaurant is that?"

"Why, Betty's, of course," she said, hanging up.

Bennett hung up and opened the book to the yellow pages. Under "Restaurants" he found a display ad for *BETTY'S—Steaks, Chops, Chicken, Cocktails, Open 8 a.m. to 2 a.m. Bill Price, Prop.*

He left the booth and walked back to the car. He drove to the address listed in the telephone book for the restaurant, getting directions from a small boy on a bicycle. The restaurant would be as good a place to begin an investigation of William J. Price as any.

The restaurant, a roadhouse, had been converted from an old farm building on the outskirts of town. Bennett pulled into the parking lot but didn't get out of his car. He didn't have to. Because a foot-high sign in the window proclaimed: *BETTY'S—HOME OF THE ORIGINAL 25-CENT MARTINI.*

Michael Dane James handed the report to Allen—he, Allen, and Bennett were sitting in James's office.

James explained: "Sam, the owner of that comfortable two-bit cocktail-hour martini joint across from your building, wired your reserved booth for sound. The mike was hooked to a tape recorder in his office. Barney found the mike in ten minutes when he joined us for a drink yesterday. A restaurant or bar owner bugging tables isn't unheard of, you know. Usually they say they're just checking customer reaction to food and service and whatnot. In this case it's obvious one of Sam's motives was to get tips on stocks. His location in the financial district would be a natural for that. His twenty-five cent martini between five and six would be a lure to bring people in. And when he got the right people—like top decision-makers for one of the nation's big mutual funds—he reserved a booth for you regularly, to make sure he could hear everything you had to say."

"As I get it," Allen said, "Sam's connection with The Happy Days Club was through his brother-in-law."

"That's right," Bennett said. "Sam came from Eaton originally. He and his sister, Betty, ran a roadhouse there. After Sam left for New York, Betty married William J. Price, and he took over the roadhouse. As time went on, and Sam got established here, he started relaying some of his inside stock information to his sister and her husband, William Price. And William, in turn, passed it on to his own brother, Frank, who lived in Canfield. Frank belonged to The Happy Days Club and got on the selection committee. Once on it, it wasn't much of a trick to control it. If necessary, he could take one of the other two committee members into his confidence, and the two of them could always outvote the third member. I'm sure most members of the club had no idea they were using information stolen from the Gibraltar Fund."

"Sam taped our conversation the day we were in his place and you gave us the assignment," James said. "He knew, then, that Bennett was going to Canfield in one role or another. And he had a brief look at Bennett when you ordered martinis for us. When Sam heard the tape he must have panicked. No doubt he called his brother-in-law, William, who in turn called Frank and warned him Bennett was on the

way. So the minute Frank Price learned Bennett was in Canfield, he asked the police to check Bennett, hoping Bennett would be run out of town."

"The mystery is solved," Allen admitted, "but it does leave me with a dilemma."

"I don't think," James smiled, "that The Happy Days Club will follow the Gibraltar Fund's lead any more. This probably scared the daylight out of William and Frank Price."

"Nevertheless," Allen said, "the problem remains: What do we do about Sam? If we expose him, we may still get all the publicity we've been trying to avoid. And if we say nothing, he'll go on eavesdropping on his patrons."

"If it were up to me," James suggested, "I'd pass the word discreetly to your employees never to go into that place again because it's bugged. The news will get around the financial district fast enough, and Sam's will die a slow but certain death."

"Why," Bennett offered, "don't you just sit there, drink his martinis, and pass along tips on stocks you think will go down instead of up?"

"I like that," Allen grinned. "Between all of us, we could give Sam enough bad advice to bankrupt him in thirty days. But we don't want to hurt any innocent investors—even in Canfield, Iowa. No, I think we'll adopt Mr. James's suggestion."

a new story by

AUTHOR: **PATRICIA HIGHSMITH**TITLE: ***The Gracious, Pleasant Life of Mrs. Afton***

TYPE: Mystery and Suspense

PROBER: Dr. Felix Bauer

LOCALE: New York City

TIME: The Present

COMMENTS: *"Dr. Bauer did not often find such pleasant people among his patients—but then Mrs. Afton had come to him last Monday in regard to her husband, not in regard to herself."*

FOR DR. FELIX BAUER, THE PSYCHO-
analyst, staring out the window
of his ground-floor office on Lex-
ington Avenue, the afternoon was
a sluggish stream which had lost its
current, or which might have been
flowing either backward or for-
ward. Traffic had thickened, but in
the molten sunlight the cars only
inched along behind red lights,
their chromium twinkling as if
with white heat. Dr. Bauer's office
was air-conditioned, actually pleas-
antly cool; but something—his logic
or his blood—told him it was hot,
and the heat depressed him.

He glanced at his wrist watch.
Miss Vavrica, who was scheduled

for 3:30, was once morefunking
her appointment. He could see her
now, wide-eyed in a movie theater
probably, hypnotizing herself so as
not to think of what she should be
doing. There were things he could
be doing in the empty minutes be-
fore his 4:15 patient, but he kept
staring out the window.

What was it about New York, the
doctor wondered, for all its speed
and ambition, that deprived him of
his initiative? He worked hard—he
always had—but in America it was
with a consciousness of working
hard. It was not like living in Vien-
na or Paris, where he had been able
to relax with wife and friends in the

evenings, and then found energy for more work, more reading, until the early hours of the morning.

Suddenly he saw in his mind the image of Mrs. Afton, small, rather stout, but still pretty with a rare, radiant prettiness of middle-age—scented, he remembered, with a gardenia cologne. The image superimposed itself on the memory of the old European evenings.

Mrs. Afton was a very pleasant woman from the American South. She bore out what he had often heard about the American South—that it preserved a tradition of living in which there was time for meals and visits and conversation and, simply, for doing nothing. He had detected it in a few of Mrs. Afton's phrases that might not have been necessary but were gratifying to hear, in her quiet good manners—and good manners usually annoyed him—which her anxiety had not caused her to forget. Mrs. Afton reflected a way of life which, like an alchemy, made the world into quite another and more beautiful one whenever he was in her presence. Dr. Bauer did not often find such pleasant people among his patients—but then Mrs. Afton had come to him last Monday in regard to her husband, not in regard to herself.

His 4:15 patient, earnest Mr. Schriever, who got full value for every penny he paid, came and went without making a bobble on the afternoon's surface.

Alone again, Dr. Bauer passed a strong, neat hand over his brows, impatiently smoothed them, and made a final note about Mr. Schriever. The young man had talked off the top of his head again, hesitating, then rushing, and no question had been able to steer him into more promising paths.

It was such people as Mr. Schriever that one had to believe one could finally help. The first barrier was always tension—not the almost objective tension of war or of poverty that Dr. Bauer had found in Europe, but the American kind of tension which was different in each individual and which each individual seemed to clasp all the closer to himself when he came to a psychoanalyst to have it dissected out.

Mrs. Afton, he now recalled, had none of that tension. It was regrettable that a woman born for happiness, reared for it, should be bound so tightly to a man who had renounced it. And it was regrettable that Dr. Bauer could do nothing for her. Today, he had decided, he must tell her he could not help her.

At precisely 5:00, Dr. Bauer's foot found the buzzer under the blue carpet and pressed it twice. He glanced at the door, then got up and opened it. Mrs. Afton came in immediately, her step quick and buoyant for all her plumpness, her carefully waved, light-brown head held high.

"Good afternoon, Dr. Bauer."

She loosened the blue chiffon scarf that did not quite match, yet blended with his carpet, and settled herself in the leather armchair. "It's so divinely cool here! I shall dread leaving today."

"Yes," he smiled. "Air-conditioning spoils one." Bent over his desk, he read through the notes he had jotted down on Monday:

Thomas Bainbridge Afton, 55. Gen. health good. Irritable. Anxiety about physical strength and training. In recent months, severe diet and exercise program. Room of hotel suite fitted with gym. equip. Exercises strenuously. Schizoid, sadist-masochist indic. Refuses treatment.

Specifically, Mrs. Afton had come to ask him how her husband might be persuaded, if not to stop his regimen, at least to temper it.

Dr. Bauer smiled at her uneasily across his desk. He should, he supposed, explain once more that he could not possibly treat someone through someone else. Mrs. Afton had pleaded with him to let her come for a second interview. And she was obviously so much more hopeful now that he found it hard to begin.

"How are things today?" he asked, as he always did.

"Very well." She hesitated. "I think I've told you almost everything there is to tell. Unless you've something to ask me." Then, as if realizing her intensity, she leaned back in her chair, blinked her blue

eyes and smiled, and the smile seemed to say what she had actually said on Monday, "I know it's funny—a husband who flexes his arms in front of a mirror like a twelve-year-old boy admiring his muscles; but you can understand that when he trembles from exhaustion afterwards, I fear for his life."

With the same kind of smile and a nod of understanding, he supposed, if he should begin, "Since your husband refuses to come personally for treatment . . ." she would let herself be dismissed and leave his office with her burden of anxiety still within her. Mrs. Afton did not spill all her troubles out at once as so many middle-aged women of her type did, and she was too proud to admit such embarrassing facts as, for instance, that her husband had ever struck her. Dr. Bauer felt sure that he had.

"I suspect, of course," he began, "that your husband is rebuilding a damaged ego through his physical culture regime. His unconscious reasoning is that having failed in other things—his business, socially perhaps, losing the property in Kentucky that you told me about, not being as good a provider as he would like to be—he can compensate by being strong physically."

Mrs. Afton looked off and her eyes widened. Dr. Bauer had seen them widen before when he challenged her, when she tried to recollect something; and he had seen them narrow suddenly when some-

thing amused her, with a flirtatiousness of youth still sparkling through the curved brown lashes. Now the tilt of her head emphasized the wide cheekbones, the narrower forehead, the softly pointed chin—a motherly face, though she had no children.

Finally, very dubiously, she replied, "I suppose that might be logical."

"But you don't agree?"

"Not entirely." She lifted her head again. "I don't think my husband considers himself quite a failure. We still live very comfortably, you know."

"Yes, of course."

She looked at the electric clock whose second hand ate away silently at the precious forty-five minutes. Her knees parted a little as she leaned forward, and her calves, like an ornamental base, curved symmetrically down to her slender ankles that she kept close together. "You can't suggest *anything* that would help me to moderate his—his routine, Dr. Bauer?"

"There's not the remotest chance he might be persuaded to come and see me?"

"I'm afraid not. I told you how he felt about doctors. He says they can tinker with him once he's dead, but he's through with them for the rest of his life. Oh, I don't think I told you that he sold his body to a medical school." She smiled again, but he saw a twitch of shame or of anger in the smile. "He did that

about six months ago. I thought you might be interested."

"Yes."

She went on with the least increase of importunity. "I do think if you could simply see him for a few moments—I mean, if he didn't know who you were—I'm sure you'd be able to learn so much more than I could ever tell you."

Dr. Bauer sighed. "You see, whatever I could tell you even then would be only guesswork. From you, or even from seeing your husband for a few moments, I cannot learn the facts that in the first place caused his obsession with athletics. I might advise you to help him build back what he has lost—his social contacts, his hobbies and so on. But I'm sure you have tried already."

Mrs. Afton conveyed with an uncertain nod that she had tried.

"And still, psychologically, that would be only correcting the surface," Dr. Bauer said, almost apologetically.

She said nothing. Her lips tightened at the corners, and she looked off at the four bright yellow echelons the venetian blinds made in a corner of the room. But despite the eagerness of her posture there was an air of hopelessness about her that made Dr. Bauer drop his eyes to the capped fountain pen that he kept rolling under one finger on his desk.

"Still, I'd be so grateful if you'd just try to see him, even if it's only

across the lobby of our hotel. Then I'd feel that whatever you said about him was more—more definite."

Whatever I say *is* definite, he thought; then he abandoned his objection, his mind going on to what he must say next—that there was nothing left for her to do but go to a domestic relations court. The court would probably advise that her husband be taken away for treatment, and Mrs. Afton, he knew, would suffer a thousand times more than when he had suggested that her husband had been a failure. She still loved her husband, and divorce was not in her mind, she had said, or even a short separation. Not only did she still love him, she was proud of him, Dr. Bauer realized.

Then suddenly it occurred to him that seeing her husband, glimpsing him, might be the final gesture of courtesy he had been groping for. After he had seen him, he would feel that he had made the maximum effort it was possible for him to make.

"I can try," he said at last.

"Oh, thank you! I'm sure it will help—I know it will." She smiled and sat up taller. She shook her head at the cigarette that Dr. Bauer extended. "I'll tell you something else that happened," she said, and he felt her gratitude radiating toward him. "I was to see you at two thirty on Monday, you know; so to get away alone, I told Thomas I

was to meet Mrs. Hatfield—my oldest friend at the hotel—at two thirty in Lord and Taylor's. Well, I was having lunch in the hotel dining room by myself at two o'clock, when Thomas came in unexpectedly. We never lunch together, because he goes to a salad bar on Madison Avenue. And there I was having lobster Newburgh, which Thomas thinks is the nearest thing to suicide, anyway. Lobster Newburgh is a specialty of the hotel on Mondays, and I always order it for lunch. Well, I'd just told Thomas I was to meet Mrs. Hatfield at two thirty, when Mrs. Hatfield herself came into the dining room. She's near-sighted and didn't see us, but my husband saw her as clearly as I did. She sat down at a table and ordered her lunch and obviously she was going to stay there an hour or more. Thomas just sat opposite me without a word, knowing I'd lied. He's like that sometimes. Then it all comes out at some other time when I'm least expecting it." She stopped, breathing quickly.

"And it came out—when?" Dr. Bauer prompted.

"Yesterday afternoon. He knew positively then that I'd gone to lunch with Mrs. Hatfield, because she came upstairs to fetch me. We had lunch at the Algonquin with a couple of our friends. When I came home at about three, Thomas was in a temper and accused me of having gone to see a picture both afternoons, though clearly there hadn't

been time to go to a picture after lunch yesterday afternoon."

"He doesn't like you to go to films?"

She shook her head, laughing, a tolerant laugh that was almost gay. "The bad air, you know. He thinks all theaters should be torn down. Oh, dear, he is funny sometimes! And he thinks the pictures I like are the lowest form of entertainment. I like a good musical comedy now and then, I must say, and I go when I please."

Dr. Bauer was sure she did not. "And what else did he say?"

"Well, he didn't say much more, but he threw his gold watch down. It was such a petulant gesture for him, I could hardly believe my eyes."

She looked at him as if expecting some reaction, then opened her handbag, brought out a gold watch, and wrapped its chain once around her forefinger as if to display it to best advantage. As the watch turned, Dr. Bauer saw a monogram of interlocked initials on its back.

"It's the watch I gave him the first year we were married. I'm old-fashioned, I suppose, but I like a man to carry a big pocket watch. By a miracle, it's still running. I'm just taking it now to have a new crystal put in. I simply picked up the watch without saying anything to him, and he put on his coat and went out for his usual afternoon walk. He walks from three till five thirty every day, rain or shine, then

comes home and showers—a cold shower—before we go out to dinner together, unless it's one of his evenings with Major Stearns. I told you Major Stearns was Thomas' best friend. They play pinochle or chess together several evenings a week.—Could you possibly see my husband this week, Dr. Bauer?"

"I think I can arrange it for Friday at noon, Mrs. Afton," he said. He worked at a clinic on Friday afternoons, and he could stop by the hotel just before. "Shall I call you Friday morning? We'll make our plans then. They're always better made as late as possible."

She got up when he did, smiling, erect. "All right. I'll expect your call then. Good day, Dr. Bauer. I feel *ever* so much better. But I'm afraid I've overstayed my time by two minutes."

He waved his hand protestingly, and held the door open for her. In a moment she was gone—all but the scent of her cologne that lingered faintly as he stood by his closed door, facing the dusk that had come at the window . . .

When Dr. Bauer arrived at his office the next morning at 9:00, Mrs. Afton had already called twice. She wanted him to call her immediately, his secretary told him, and he meant to as soon as he had hung up his hat; but his telephone buzzed first.

"Can you come this morning?" Mrs. Afton asked.

The tremor of fear in her voice alerted him. "I'm sure I can, Mrs. Afton. What has happened?"

"He knows I've been seeing you about him. Seeing *someone*, I mean. He accused me of it outright this morning, just after he came back from his morning walk—as if he'd discovered it out of thin air. He accused me of being disloyal to him and he packed his suitcases and said he was leaving. He's out now—not with the suitcases, they're still here, so I know he's just walking. He'll probably be back by ten or so. Could you possibly come now?"

"Is he in violent temper? Has he struck you?"

"Oh, no! Nothing like that. But I know it's the end. I know it can't go on after this."

Dr. Bauer calculated how many appointments he would have to cancel. His 10:15 appointment, and possibly his 11:00. "Can you be in the lobby at ten fifteen?"

"Oh, certainly, Dr. Bauer!"

He found it hard to concentrate during his 9:15 consultation, and remembering Mrs. Afton's voice, he wished he had started off immediately for her hotel. Whatever the circumstances, Mrs. Afton had engaged his services, and he was therefore responsible for her.

In a taxi at 10:03, he lighted a cigarette and sat motionless, unable to look at the newspaper he had brought with him. Mid-morning of a day in mid-June, he thought, and while he was borne passively in a

taxi that continually turned corners and met red lights, Mrs. Thomas Bainbridge Afton was at the crisis of more than twenty-five years of marriage.

And of what use would he be to her? To call for help in case of violence, and to utter the usual phrases of comfort, of advice, if her husband had come back and then gone away with his suitcases? It was the end of the gracious, pleasant life of Mrs. Afton, who without her husband would never be quite so happy again with her friends.

He could hear the remarks she had already made to them: "Thomas has his peculiarities . . . he has his little fads." And finally, after embarrassments, compromises, to herself: "He is impossible." Yet through pride or breeding or duty, she had maintained, along with her sense of humor, the look of being happily married. "Thomas is an ideal husband—*was* . . ."

A swerve of the taxi interrupted his thoughts. They had stopped in the middle of a block between Fifth and Sixth Avenues in the Forties, at a hotel smaller and shabbier than he had anticipated—a narrow, tucked-away building that he supposed was filled with middle-aged people like the Aftons, residents of decades or more.

Mrs. Afton walked quickly toward him across the black and white tile floor, and her tense face broke into a smile of welcome. She wiped a handkerchief across her

palm and extended her hand. "How good of you, Dr. Bauer! He's come back and he's upstairs now. I thought I might introduce you as a friend of a friend of mine—of Mrs. Lanuxe of Charleston. I could say you've just stopped by for a moment before you have to catch a train."

"As you like." He followed her toward the elevator, relieved to find her in such good command of herself.

They entered a tiny, rattling elevator manned by an old man, and were silent as the elevator climbed slowly. Close to her now, Dr. Bauer could see the traces of gray in her light-brown hair, and could hear her too fast breathing. The handkerchief was tightly clenched in one hand.

"It's this way."

They went along a darkish corridor, down a couple of steps to a different level, and stopped at a tall door.

"I'm sure he's in his own room, but I always knock," she whispered. Then she opened the door. "This is the living room."

Dr. Bauer had unconsciously stuffed his newspaper into his jacket pocket so that his hands would be free. Now he found himself in an empty, rather depressing room containing hotel furniture, a few books, a brass chandelier that was a spray of former gas pipes, and an undersized black fireplace.

"He's in here," she said, going to-

ward another door. "Thomas?" She opened the door cautiously.

There was no answer.

"He isn't in?" Dr. Bauer asked.

Mrs. Afton seemed embarrassed for a moment. "He must have stepped out again. But you can come in meanwhile and see what I've been talking to you about. This is his gymnasium, as he calls it."

Dr. Bauer entered a room about half the size of the living room, and much dimmer, since it had only one fire-escape window. It took him a moment to make out the odd shapes lying on the floor and hanging from the ceiling. There was a punching bag, a large cylindrical sandbag for tackling, an exercise horse with handgrips, and two basketballs on the floor. He picked up a boxing glove from the floor and the other came with it, fastened by its laces.

"And he has a machine for rowing. It's in the closet there," Mrs. Afton said.

"Can we have more light?"

"Oh, of course." She pulled a cord and a bare lightbulb came on at the ceiling. "Any other day, he'd be right here now. I'm so sorry. I'm sure he'll be back any minute."

The laces of the boxing gloves, Dr. Bauer saw, were crisp and white, threading all the eyelets, as if they had never been undone. Under the light now he saw that all the equipment looked brand-new. The exercise horse was a little dusty, but its leather bore no sign of wear.

He frowned at the tan-colored sandbag only a few inches from his eyes. On the side nearest to him a diamond-shaped paper label was still pasted. Certainly none of the equipment had been used. It was such a surprise to him that at first he did not realize what it meant.

"And there's the mirror." She pointed to a tall mirror resting on the floor but quite upright against a wall. She chuckled. "He's eternally in front of that."

Dr. Bauer nodded. Despite her smile, he saw more anxiety in her face than on the afternoon of their first interview—an anxiety that made ugly, tortured ridges of her thin eyebrows. Her hands shook as she picked up a measuring tape and began to roll it neatly around two fingers, waiting trustfully for some comment from him.

"Perhaps I should wait in the lobby," Dr. Bauer murmured.

"All right. I'll call down and have you paged when he comes in. He always uses the stairs. I suppose that's how we missed him when he went out."

The stairway was directly in front of Dr. Bauer when he went out into the hall. He took it somewhat dazedly. A slight blond man came up the stairs, seemed to eye him a moment before he passed, but Dr. Bauer was sure it could not be Mr. Afton.

He felt stunned, without knowing exactly what had stunned him. In the lobby he looked one way,

then the other, and finally went to the desk that was half hidden under a different set of stairs.

"You have a Mrs. Afton registered here," he said, stating it more than asking.

The young man at the switchboard looked up from his newspaper. "Afton? No, sir."

"Mrs. Afton in Room Thirty-two."

"No, sir. No Afton here at all."

"Then who is it in Room Thirty-two?" At least he was sure of the room number.

The young man checked quickly with his list over the switchboard. "That's Miss Gorham's suite." And slowly, as he looked at Dr. Bauer, his face took on an amused smile.

"Miss Gorham? She's not married?" Dr. Bauer moistened his lips. "She lives by herself?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know the person I mean? A woman about fifty, somewhat plump, light-brown hair?"

He knew, he *knew*—but he had to make sure, doubly sure.

"Miss Gorham, yes—Miss Frances Gorham."

Dr. Bauer looked into the smiling eyes of the young man who knew Miss Gorham, and wondered what the clerk knew that he didn't. Many a time Mrs. Afton must have smiled at this young man, too, ingratiated herself as she had with him in his office.

"Thank you," he said. Then absently, "Nothing more."

He faced in the other direction, staring at nothing, setting his teeth until the sensation of reality's crumbling stopped and the world righted itself again and became hard, a little shabby like the hotel lobby . . . until there was definitely no more Mrs. Afton.

He was walking toward the door when a compulsion to return to routine made him look at his wrist watch, made him realize he could be back for his 11:00 appointment after all, because it was not quite 10:40. He veered toward the coffin-like form of a telephone booth that was nearly hidden behind a large jar of palms. A shelf with telephone directories was at the side under a light, and some stubborn, some senseless curiosity prompted him to turn to the A's in the Manhattan directory.

There was only one Afton, and that was the trade name of some kind of shop.

He entered the booth and dialed his office number.

"Would you try to reach Mr. Schriever again," he told his secretary, "and ask him if he can still come at eleven. With my apologies for the changes. And when is Mrs. Afton's next appointment?"

"Just a moment. We have her tentatively scheduled for two thirty Monday."

"Would you change that please to an appointment for Miss Gorham?" he said distinctly. "Miss Frances Gorham for the same time?"

"Gorham? That's G-o-r-h-a-m?"

"Yes. I suppose so."

"That's a new patient, Dr. Bauer?"

"Yes," he said.



CLASSIFIED

Rates \$1.00 per Word

RARE BOOKS

Out of print mysteries? Our Specialty. Aardvarks Book Detectives, Box 668, San Diego 12, California.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

ASSEMBLE Artificial Lures at Home for stores. Material supplied Free. Profitable! Write: Lures, Ft. Walton Beach, Fla.

I Made \$40,000.00 Year by Mailorder! Helped others make money! Start with \$10.00—Free Proof. Torrey, Box 3566-T, Oklahoma City 6, Okla.



HAVE YOU READ
**THE WORLD OF
ESPIONAGE**

By Bernard Newman

\$4.95

Available at

**THE BRITISH
BOOK CENTRE**

Dept. EQ6, 122 E. 55th St., New York 22, N.Y.

AUTHOR: **WILLIAM P. MCGIVERN**

TITLE: ***The Last Word***

TYPE: Detective Story

DETECTIVE: Adam James, foreign correspondent

LOCALE: Yugoslavia

TIME: About ten years ago

COMMENTS: *Murder on the famous Orient Express . . . exotic, exciting, and an exercise in the art of deduction—and in the expertise of human behavior . . .*

THE ORIENT EXPRESS STOPS FOR AN hour or more at the Yugoslav-Trieste border. Customs are a formality as a rule, but the changing of foreign currencies into dinars takes quite a bit of time.

Knowing this, Adam James yawned slightly as the train pulled into Sesana. He wasn't really bored; he merely wished he were in Belgrade, at work, instead of here at the frontier.

He rubbed the window of his compartment with the palm of his hand. There was little to see outside—uniformed customs officials waiting to board the train, an oiler walking down the opposite track, and beyond the wooden station,

white foothills under a dark sky. It was a cheerless prospect; the hills were huddled together, as if the earth had hunched its shoulders against the bitter weather.

The customs officer knocked and entered, bringing in a touch of coldness on his clothes and breath. He was cordial and efficient, and bowed himself out with a smile a few minutes later. The money-control officer was equally cordial, but his work took more time. Finally he too went away, and Adam sat down with his book and lit his pipe.

However, his moment of peace was brief. The argument between the couple in the adjoining compartment flared up again, and he

closed his book with a sigh. They had been at it, off and on, since the Orient Express had left Trieste an hour or so ago, and the partition between the compartments was so thin that Adam could hardly ignore the noise. They spoke Croatian or Serbian, neither of which he understood, but the anger in their voices was unmistakable—no matter what the language.

He had noticed them in Trieste where they had boarded the train. The woman was very attractive, with light blonde hair, clear fresh skin, and the slender, gracefully muscled legs of a dancer. She was in her early thirties, Adam had guessed, and wore a plum-colored tweed suit under a good fur coat.

The man was stout and florid, with small alert eyes, and a manner of petulant importance. He was fastidiously turned out in a black overcoat with a fur-trimmed collar, a black Homburg, and, rather inevitably Adam had thought, carried a cane. His gray flannel trousers were sharply creased, and his spats gleamed whitely against his glossy black shoes.

There was something about the two of them, some constraint in their manner, that had caught Adam's attention. They said little to each other as they waited to board the train, but there was a quality in the set of their shoulders which indicated they had plenty to say and were only waiting for the chance to say it.

Unfortunately for himself, Adam thought, they got their chance when they were finally alone in their compartment. At first he'd been mildly interested in their bickering; but as they became angrier and louder, he had become irritated.

There was a knock on the door, and the conductor entered. He was a small, neatly built man with quick intelligent eyes, and had a tiny black mustache above a generous but cautious mouth.

"Your passport, sir," he said, handing Adam the slim green gold-lettered booklet. "Everything is in order. You will not be disturbed again until we arrive in Belgrade."

"Thanks, but I haven't been disturbed," Adam said.

The conductor raised his eyebrows. "That's an unusual reaction for an American. Most of you are—well, impulsive. You have no patience."

"Oh, there are all types of Americans," Adam said with a smile. "Also, there are all types of French, British, and even Yugoslavians, I imagine."

"No, you are wrong. Here in Yugoslavia we grow up with the land, and become like it, slow and patient. You Americans are different. Excitable, I mean. You leap at things. That is desirable in some matters, but it can also cause trouble."

"That may well be," Adam said.

He had spent fifteen years of his life as a foreign correspondent, and his job, reduced to an oversimplification, was to find out what people thought, and why they thought it. He was interested in the conductor's opinions, and he wanted to put the man at ease. He raised a hand as the argument in the next compartment broke out again. "Are they Americans?" he asked innocently.

"No, of course not."

"Well, *they* seem pretty excitable."

The conductor looked blank. Then he smiled good-humoredly. "I asked for that, as you say. No, they are Yugoslavians. The Duvecs—she is a dancer, he is an actor." The conductor listened to the argument with a little smile. "The artistic temperament," he said. "Well, I must go on with my work. I have not offended you with my directness, eh?"

"Certainly not. Stop by when you get a minute and we'll finish our talk."

"Thank you, I shall try."

The conductor went away and Adam returned to his book. He was grateful, a chapter later, when the train began to move. Sesana was behind them now. They would pass Zagreb sometime after dinner, and be in Belgrade the following morning. He would have been almost cheerful if it weren't for the argument in the next compartment.

The couple had reached a new and higher pitch after a few mo-

ments of blessed silence. The woman's voice was shrill now, where before it had been somewhat controlled. The man shouted at her whenever she ceased speaking.

This continued for a few moments, and then Adam heard the door of the compartment jerked open energetically. The man shouted a last sentence or two, then the door was banged shut with angry finality. Adam heard the man's heavy footsteps pass his door, and fade away in the direction of the dining-car.

"Well, well," he thought, "peace at last!" There was nothing quite like a door-slamming exit to put an end to an argument. Perversely, however, now that everything was quiet, he lost interest in his book. He decided to have dinner and finish his reading later—though probably by then the argument would be on again, he thought wryly.

He washed his face, combed his hair, and walked through the lurching train to the dining-car. There were two third-class coaches connected to the *Wagon-Lit*, filled with stolid, impassive soldiers who endured the unheated compartments with the stoic acceptance of domestic animals.

There was no menu on the Express, just the one *prix-fixe* dinner: soup, roast veal and vegetables served with a theoretically white, but in fact, orange-colored Dalmatian wine. This was followed by

stewed prunes and thick sweet Turkish coffee.

The man in the fur-trimmed overcoat, Duvec, was seated at the far end of the diner, hungrily and belligerently attacking a bowl of soup. He wore an angrily righteous look, and was probably reviewing the argument with his wife in the most favorable possible light. Duvec wore his overcoat buttoned up to the throat, and occasionally put down his spoon and rubbed his plump hands together to warm them, though the diner wasn't cold; Adam was comfortable enough in his suit-coat.

The sleeping-car conductor entered the diner a few moments later, looking pale and agitated. He glanced about quickly, then striding to Duvec's table, he bent and whispered a few words. Their effect was electric. Duvec sprang to his feet, almost overturning his table, and his mouth opened and closed soundlessly.

"Please come with me," the conductor said in a firm voice.

The two men hurried from the car, the other diners staring after them curiously. Adam frowned at the tablecloth for a moment or so, oddly disturbed. Finally, obeying a compulsion he didn't quite understand, he rose and started back through the train for the sleeping-car. But at the vestibule he was stopped by a blue-uniformed mail-car guard. The man put a hand against Adam's chest.

"You must not enter," he said, in slow, laborious English.

"But this is my car," Adam said.

"You must not come in."

"Has something happened?"

The guard merely shook his round head stubbornly.

At this point the sleeping-car conductor appeared in the opposite vestibule. He opened the door and spoke a few words to the mail-car guard.

"You may come in," the conductor said.

"What has happened?" Adam asked.

"A great tragedy, a great tragedy," the conductor said, rubbing his mustache nervously. Adam became aware that the train was slowing down.

"We're stopping?" he asked.

"Yes, yes. Please come inside."

Adam followed him into the sleeping-car and turned the corner into the aisle. Duvec stood before the open door of his compartment, sobbing terribly. Beyond him, held by two mail-car guards, was a stocky Yugoslavian soldier in a patched and dirty uniform.

Duvec turned away from his compartment and sagged weakly against the wall. He beat a fist slowly against his forehead, and his lips opened and closed as if he were praying.

Adam stepped forward and glanced into Duvec's compartment. He knew what he would see. Somehow he had anticipated this; but it

was still a jarring, shocking sight.

Mrs. Duvec lay on the floor in the careless, undignified sprawl of death. One slender leg was doubled under her body, and a lock of blonde hair lay across her pale throat. The bronze handle of a letter opener—or a knife—protruded from between her breasts.

The train had come to a full stop. There was no sound as Adam stepped back from the compartment except Duvec's strangled sobs.

The conductor touched Adam's arm. "You will be good enough to remain in your compartment please. I have sent a messenger back to the police at Sesana. We will wait until they arrive."

"Naturally," Adam rejoined. "But what happened?"

"It was the soldier. He thought all the passengers were in the dining-car. He came in to pilfer what he could, I imagine. He was surprised when he found the woman here, he lost his head—" The conductor shrugged eloquently. "It is a great tragedy."

The soldier seemed to understand what was being said. His eyes were wild and frightened. He suddenly shouted, "*Ni! Ni!*" and chattered out a stream of words which Adam didn't understand.

"He protests his innocence," the conductor said matter-of-factly. "That is to be expected."

"He lies, he lies!" Duvec said in a ragged voice. "He killed my wife, and he must die for it."

"There is no doubt he is guilty," the conductor agreed. "We can establish that easily. Your wife was alive when you left her?"

"Yes, yes! My God, yes!" Duvec cried. He began to sob again, hopelessly. "We had a quarrel, a silly, stupid quarrel, and I left in anger. But she was alive, alive as we are now." He glanced at Adam, as if noticing him for the first time. "But *you* must have heard our quarrel."

"Yes, I heard it," Adam said.

"Then you heard our voices until the moment I left."

Adam nodded. "Yes, I heard you."

The conductor also nodded. "Then there is proof that she was alive when her husband left. The soldier admits going into her compartment—but at that point he loses his love for the truth."

"What's his story?" Adam asked.

"He says that Mrs. Duvec was already dead. This is why he attempted to flee, he tells us."

"Who caught him?"

"I had appointed a guard for this car while I worked out space plans with the attendant in the next car," the conductor said. "We get a crowd at Zagreb, and it is necessary to prepare for them in advance. I appointed a guard because the sleeping-car is empty during the dinner hour, and the soldiers—well, you understand how it is with soldiers. The guard, a man from the mail-car, was at the opposite vestibule—

that is, he was at the other end of the car from where we now stand. Something caused him to turn and glance down the aisle. He saw the soldier backing out of the Duvec's compartment. He shouted, and the soldier attempted to run back to his own car. But the guard caught him, fortunately."

"What caused the guard to look down the aisle?"

The conductor raised his eyebrows. "Who can tell? The good Lord, perhaps; it was an impulse—and it apprehended a murderer. The guard will be officially congratulated."

"Yes, yes, of course," Adam murmured. "Catching murderers is always a cause for congratulations. Whose knife did the soldier use, by the way?"

The conductor looked blank. He turned to Duvec, who said, "It was my wife's letter opener. Perhaps she was using it when the soldier burst in on her."

"That is logical," the conductor said. "We will get the truth from him, all of it, you will see."

Suddenly the soldier shouted wildly and broke away from his two guards. He ran down the narrow aisle, jerked open the door at the end of the car, and disappeared. The guards lumbered after him.

The conductor remained calm. "He cannot leave the train," he said. "The vestibule doors are secured from the outside. That was my first order. He will be caught."

Adam glanced at the conductor, frowning. Finally he said, "Excuse me, please," and entered his own compartment. He sat down and lit his pipe.

Something was wrong about all this, wrong as the very devil, and he could feel it in his bones. But how could he prove it? He stretched his long legs out and rested his head against the back of the seat. Proof . . . where was it?

He puffed on his pipe, trying to recall everything that had happened since the Orient Express left Trieste. He sorted out all the details he could remember, and turned them upside down and inside out, trying desperately to justify his conviction.

The conductor appeared in his doorway ten minutes later, wearing a small pleased smile. "It is finished," he said. "We have caught him. He tried to hide in the coal-car, but was found."

Adam stood up and began knocking the dottle from his pipe. "That's fine," he said. "The only thing is, you've got the wrong man."

"The wrong man? Impossible! His guilt is proved by his attempt to escape."

"Nonsense. He's simply scared out of his wits. Bring everyone here, and I'll show you the murderer," Adam said, marveling at the ring of confidence in his voice.

The conductor said stubbornly, "This is a police matter, I must remind you."

"Yes, but it won't be to your credit if you present them with an innocent man when they arrive."

The conductor rubbed his thin black mustache. "Very well," he said at last. "I am not afraid to test your opinion against mine. I have reached my conclusions logically. I am not in error."

"We'll see," Adam said.

The soldier was brought back down the aisle, securely held by two mail-car guards. He was not more than eighteen, a strongly-built youth with a dull face and blank eyes; obviously he had resigned himself to his fate. Duvec, who still wore his fur-trimmed overcoat, stood at the end of the aisle, occasionally rubbing a hand despairingly over his broad forehead.

Adam was in the doorway of his compartment. The soldier and his guards were at his left, Duvec and the conductor on his right. They all watched him expectantly.

"This soldier did not kill Mrs. Duvec," Adam said quietly.

"What do you know about it?" Duvec demanded.

"If you listen, you will find out."

"I will not listen. You have no authority here."

"Silence!" the conductor said in a sharp voice. "I am in charge until the police arrive. I have given the American permission to speak."

"Thank you," said Adam. "As I have said, the soldier did not kill Mrs. Duvec. I think I can prove that to everyone's satisfaction. First

of all, has it not struck you as odd that the guard in this car did not hear Mrs. Duvec scream?"

For an instant there was silence. Then the conductor said, "She was struck down before she could cry out." However, Adam's question brought a tiny frown to his face.

"I think that's an unlikely explanation," Adam said. "Let's reconstruct what must have happened if the soldier is the murderer. First, he opened the door of the compartment. Mrs. Duvec looked up at him, startled and probably frightened. What would one expect her to do? Scream, of course."

"My wife was no silly maiden," Duvec snapped. "She would not scream at the sight of a man; she would have ordered him from the compartment. That is unquestionably what happened. She asked him to leave and he took advantage of that moment to seize the letter opener from her and plunge it into her heart. Yes, he silenced her before she could scream."

The conductor nodded, looking somewhat relieved. "Yes, certainly that is it," he said.

"No, that isn't it," Adam said. "Why would a strong agile young man use a knife on a woman? If he wanted to silence her, he would use his hands. In the time it would take him to grasp the knife away from her and strike her down with it, she might have screamed half a dozen times. And yet, I repeat, the guard in this car heard no

sound at all from Mrs. Duvec."

The conductor shook his head impatiently. "You are making up theories. We are dealing with facts. According to your own testimony, Mrs. Duvec was alive when her husband left the compartment. She was dead when the soldier left the compartment. Those are the facts. No one but the soldier could have killed her."

"You're wrong, but it's partly my fault," Adam said. "I've misled you. However, I'll clear things up now. There's the murderer," he said—and pointed to Duvec.

"Monstrous!" Duvec shouted. "I will not stand for this slander."

"Let me ask you this," Adam said. "Why are you wearing a heavy overcoat in a comfortably heated train? What is under it, Duvec? Or, more to the point, what *isn't* under it?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," Duvec snapped.

"I'll tell you, then," Adam said. "What *isn't* under that overcoat is your suit-coat—the suit-coat which was bloodied when you murdered your wife. When I saw you in the diner I knew something was odd. You wouldn't have worn an overcoat all the way from Trieste, so you must have put it on before leaving your compartment. However, the emotional fireworks accompanying your departure made it seem unlikely that you would have stopped to put on an overcoat. That routine bit of business would have shattered the effect of your exit. But

why wear the coat at all? The train isn't cold. Therefore, I decided, it was worn not for comfort but for camouflage. And what was it you were so eager to camouflage?"

"You are talking like a madman," Duvec protested. "My wife was alive when I left her. You know that is true. You admitted you heard us."

"I said I heard *you*," Adam corrected him. "Duvec, you killed your wife in a moment of rage. This puts you in a tough predicament. There was a witness of sorts to the crime—an auditory witness, in the next compartment—myself. But I could be used to your advantage. You could create the illusion that your wife was alive when you left her by taking both parts of the dialogue for a moment or so before banging out of the compartment. This was no trick for an actor. Meanwhile, as you imitated your wife's voice, you removed your bloodstained suit-coat and got into your overcoat. Then you left the compartment with a final artistic bellow at your wife. The suit-coat, I'll bet, you either hid in your compartment or threw off the train on the way to the diner. In either event, a search will produce it."

"Talk, talk, talk!" Duvec cried.

"Take off your overcoat," said Adam.

"This is childish nonsense," Duvec said angrily. He unbuttoned his overcoat and flung it open. He wore a gray tweed jacket above

gray flannel trousers. There was a little silence, in which Adam felt his stomach contract unpleasantly.

"Are you satisfied now?" Duvec said contemptuously.

The conductor had placed a hand on Duvec's arm as Adam had talked. Now he removed it hastily. "Forgive me," he said.

"Wait a minute," Adam said, frowning. He noticed that Duvec wore ruby cuff links. What was wrong with that?

"No—enough," the conductor said irritably. "There will be no more of these wild accusations."

"No, I'm right," Adam snapped. "He wouldn't wear cuff links with a tweed jacket—any more than he'd wear black shoes with a brown suit. Of course! He changed into the tweed jacket, and hid the blood-stained suit-coat underneath the overcoat. He threw the suit-coat out one of the vestibule doors. He was fairly safe then—at least, he had an alibi. But luck joined forces with him and provided the crime with a reasonable suspect. The soldier blundered onto the scene and put Duvec completely into the clear. But it won't work. I'll bet one hundred dollars to a dinar that the police will find a bloodstained flannel jacket within ten miles of this spot."

Duvec began to weep. "I can stand no more!" he cried. "My wife is dead, and I hear myself called her murderer!"

He turned aside, still sobbing, and put a hand to the vestibule door for support. The gesture was so natural that no one noticed him reach for the doorknob.

He jerked open the door and was into the vestibule before any one could move. The conductor shouted at the mail-car guards who still held the soldier. They plunged out of the car after Duvec, with the conductor on their heels.

They caught him in the next coach and dragged him back to the sleeping-car. Duvec offered no resistance. He stared straight ahead with shoulders slumped, and there was an expression of terrible anguish on his face. Adam realized that for the first time since the murder of his wife Duvec had ceased being an actor.

In a low, trembling voice, he said, "She was going to leave me, you see. I—couldn't stand that. I—couldn't."

Half an hour later the conductor came to Adam's compartment. "You must excuse me," he said, rather sheepishly. "I think of what I said about the excitable Americans, and my face becomes hot with shame. I must apologize."

"Please don't worry about it," Adam said.

"But I do not understand completely. Your proof was not overwhelming, I do not think. And yet you seemed so *sure*."

"I was sure," Adam said. "You see, in the classic tradition, Duvec

made one mistake which I didn't bother to mention. When he acted out the scene with his dead wife, he arranged the dialogue badly. He shouted a few last words at her, you will remember, and then banged the door."

The conductor looked blank. Finally he rubbed his mustache and smiled slowly.

"You understand, of course,"

Adam said. "In Yugoslavia or America—anywhere for that matter—arguments between husbands and wives seldom end that way. When I realized that, I knew Duvec was guilty. You see, Mrs. Duvec wouldn't have let him get away with the last word—if she were alive, that is."

"But of course," the conductor agreed, nodding gravely.



CURRENT MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE HARDCOVERS

AUTHOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	PRICE	ON SALE
Devine, D. M.	DOCTORS ALSO DIE	Dodd, Mead & Co.	\$3.50	1/14/63
Gardner, Erle Stanley	THE CASE OF THE MISCHIEVOUS DOLL	William Morrow & Co.	3.50	1/9/63
Marris, J. J.	GIDEON'S RIDE	Harper & Row	3.50	1/2/63
Newman, Bernard	THE WORLD OF ESPIONAGE	British Book Centre, Inc.	4.95	1/25/63
Roth, Holly	TOO MANY DOCTORS	Random House, Inc.	3.50	1/23/63
Rydell, Forbes	NO QUESTIONS ASKED	Doubleday & Company, Inc.	3.50	1/4/63
Seth, Ronald	ANATOMY OF SPYING	E. P. Dutton & Co.	5.95	1/10/63
Shannon, Dell	DEATH OF A BUSYBODY	William Morrow & Co.	3.50	1/2/63
Thorn, Ronald Scott	SECOND OPINION	The Macmillan Company	3.95	1/7/63
Truss, Seldon	TECHNIQUE FOR TREACHERY	Doubleday & Company, Inc.	3.50	1/4/63
Upfield, Arthur	THE BODY AT MADMAN'S BEND	Doubleday & Company, Inc.	3.50	1/18/63
Wilhelm, Kate	MORE BITTER THAN DEATH	Simon & Schuster	3.50	1/11/63
Woods, Sara	BLOODY INSTRUCTIONS	Harper & Row	3.95	1/30/63



CURRENT MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE PAPERBACKS

AUTHOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	PRICE	ON SALE
Eberhart, Mignon G.	THE WHITE DRESS	Popular Library	40¢	1/17/63
Prather, Richard S.	HAVE GAT—WILL TRAVEL	Gold Medal	35¢	12/26/62
Prather, Richard S.	SLAB HAPPY	Gold Medal	40¢	12/26/62
Prather, Richard S.	THREE'S A SHROUD	Gold Medal	35¢	12/26/62
Rabe, Peter	THE BOX	Gold Medal	35¢	12/26/62
Webb, Jack	THE GILDED WITCH	Regency Original Books	50¢	Jan. '63

DEPARTMENT OF "FIRST STORIES"

This is the 245th "first story" to be published by Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine" . . . When you finally think that every possible innovation, deviation, and permutation of Holmesian pastiches and parodies have been imagined (see THE MISADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES and the sequels thereof in EQMM), along comes a never-before-done variation, a genuine newfangledment of Sherlockiana, to warm the nostalgic cockles of your heart. Here, then, is the newest wrinkle of an old chestnut, and you'll find it, we are confident, a charming and utterly delightful "return."

From the biographical "explanation" by Robert Zimler, one of the authors: "Michael is my 16-year-old son, who did the basic story as an exercise in style for his high school English course. Both as a parent and a mystery-story fan, I thought it a pity to let his imitation of a Sherlock Holmes tale go at that. With his consent, I tried to set the story into a framework which could stand on its own."

P.S.: The senior Zimler works on public affairs programs for television.

P.P.S.: We'll bet there will be more Waystoane-and-Holmeyer Holmes-and-Watson adventures and memoirs!

HOME OFFICE: 221B BAKER STREET; or,

A Study in Cement

by ROBERT and MICHAEL ZIMLER

NO, THANKS, I DON'T DRINK. I'M a theatrical agent and every good agent, you should understand, has ulcers. Anyway, you don't need to feed me liquor to get me talking. Besides, I haven't had time for lunch yet, so let's adjourn to the restaurant across the street where we can have some cheese

blintzes with sour cream and I'll tell you the whole inside story. But I warn you in advance, you won't be able to print it unless your paper maybe likes being sued for \$1,000,-000 for libel.

You see, the trouble with you is that you're a crime reporter. Forgive me for being personal, but I've

noticed that all crime reporters try to make like Hildy Johnson in *The Front Page*. But if you were a theatrical reporter or—you should excuse the expression, a drama critic—then you'd understand about actors. Maybe you remember the story about Raymond Massey when he was playing the title role in *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*? No? Well, after a few weeks as Lincoln, Massey is playing the Great Emancipator off-stage as well as on. A Broadway wit notices the actor walking through Times Square—a brooding, tragic figure even while he's busy dodging taxicabs—and says, "There goes Raymond Massey, carrying the weight of the whole Civil War on his shoulders. He won't be really happy until *he's* assassinated."

Well, that's what I'm trying to tell you about Jason Waystoane. To you, he's an actor without a job. But to himself, he's Sherlock Holmes. And not just to himself, but to millions of Americans who saw him in the movies regularly for fifteen years, he's the only Sherlock Holmes there is. Who knows from books?

Now, after all those years of solving crimes and apprehending master criminals, Jason Waystoane is just another has-been actor. Understand, I'm not asking you to be sorry for Jason Waystoane. He owns a lovely farm in Connecticut, he's got a barnful of props and costumes for souvenirs, and you

should have his annuities and investments. But can a real actor, a thespian who played Shakespeare, Shaw, and Ibsen on the London stage, be happy if he's not acting?

A few weeks ago he comes in to see me and I'm not surprised. It's time for him to remind me he's even willing to appear on television. "Sherm," he says, "as your lack of energy on my behalf has forced me into premature retirement, I've now taken up beekeeping." He sighs. "Why Sherlock Holmes did, I'll never know. True, there is very little overhead because the bees are accustomed to seeking out their own nourishment. But the demand for honey is conspicuous by its absence. I've already got two thousand gallons of honey on hand and I'll have to invest in a larger storehouse unless I can somehow induce the bees to cut down on production for a while. By the way, I've brought you some honey." He plunks a big jug on my desk.

I respond enthusiastically. "Imagine, fresh honey! I haven't tasted really fresh honey since I was a boy in Czechoslovakia."

"That's \$5.50," he says crisply. "You get back a fifty-cent deposit when you return the jug." He pockets my money and continues, "Now let's get down to business. Have you secured any offers for me?"

"No, Jason. You see—"

He interrupts. "I anticipated

your continued failure and have made my own preparations for gainful employment. Kindly peruse this announcement, which I shall insert in the local press."

With a graceful flourish he hands me a piece of paper on which the following text is hand-lettered:

From the 15th of May

Mr. Jason Waystoane
internationally celebrated for his distinguished portrayal of
SHERLOCK HOLMES
WILL UNDERTAKE CONFIDENTIAL ENQUIRIES INTO MATTERS SUFFICIENTLY NOVEL OR COMPLEX TO MERIT HIS ATTENTION

Home Office:

221 B Baker Street, London

New York Office:

1442 Broadway

"What a noble mind is here overthrown," I say. "You've flipped your wig, Jason."

"It offends me to hear a groundling quote the Bard—and out of context at that," he grumbles. "I have devoted considerable thought to such an undertaking. There is a vast need, I have discovered, for an intelligent private detective competent to solve the bizarre problems that arise daily in our teeming and colorful metropolis."

"We still have a police force, no?"

Jason sneers the sneer he made famous as Richard III. "Ha! It's easily twenty-five years and our police haven't been able to locate Judge Crater yet. And tell me, if

you received some orange pips in the mail, would you expect the nearest desk-sergeant to show a zealous interest?"

"No," I admit. "It wouldn't even be fair to expect him to recognize an orange pip because I certainly can't. But there are also a good number of private detective agencies listed in the classified telephone directory."

"I have made a careful study of my potential competition by scrutinizing every private-eye program on television for the past month. Believe me, Sherm," he says with conviction, "the modern private eyes are not in the same league with Sherlock Holmes. And if any of them do solve crimes, it is simply by their sheer physical ability to recuperate instantaneously from beatings, stompings, and even multiple bullet wounds. I stress the word 'if' because on one program last week I am certain an innocent woman was apprehended. The real murderer—I would take my oath on this, Sherm—is still at liberty, although I spotted him within five minutes of the opening commercial."

"Jason," I say weakly, "That's only television entertainment. It's different in real life."

"You miss the point, Sherm. If this is the way private eyes are continuously portrayed to the public, does the public feel any confidence in them? Suppose you were the equerry of a certain king who had written indiscreet letters to an ad-

venturess, would you approach a private eye on behalf of your monarch? I think not," he concludes firmly.

As Waystoane is clearly serious, I get serious too. "Don't you understand you can't represent yourself as Sherlock Holmes without committing a fraud or a copyright infringement or something?"

With a beautiful gesture of his hand that would register in Row Z of any theater balcony, he waves my objection away. "I have consulted with able legal counsel. They advise me that I am free to *talk* like Holmes, *dress* like Holmes, and even furnish my office as a counterpart of Holmes's lodgings. I may not, however, claim to *be* Sherlock Holmes. So I shall proclaim that I am only my humble self, continuing my noted interpretation of Holmes—but now in real life. For a bit of colorful but harmless detail, I have obtained a London mailing address on Baker Street."

I shake my head. Who can argue with an actor?

Waystoane goes on energetically, "In any event, old friend, I did not come to ask your approbation but to beseech your active aid. Can there be a Holmes without a Watson? Will you consent to play the supporting role?"

This completely convinces me that Jason has been deranged by his retirement worse than even King Lear, because just as long as Waystoane has been playing Holmes,

Anthony Quavell has been playing Dr. Watson. Expressing restrained grief, I ask, "How and when did the Grim Reaper come for Tony Quavell? That's the first death notice for an actor I've ever missed."

Waystoane snorts. "You know very well that oaf is still with us, but what you don't know is how mercenary he is. He insists that acting is acting, whether on a stage or in an office, and he will not accept one cent less than the Equity minimum. I offered him ten per cent. of the profits but he only threatened to report me to the Committee on Member Violations."

I am sympathetic but I am not getting involved. "That may be tough for your plans but I'm an agent, not an actor, with my own business to look after."

Acting exactly as if he's exposing the murderer in the last two minutes of the movie, Waystoane says, "Even fresh off the boat from England, you don't think I took the first agent who came along without checking on him, do you? To me, nothing in your past is hidden. You began as an actor of some skill. But when roles became scarce, a serious defect in your character led you to turn to the profitable and parasitic occupation of agent. Ever since then, you've been playing a most hackneyed part as a Broadway-Jewish theatrical agent, complete to eating in kosher restaurants and keeping your office closed on Rosh Hashanah.

"As for your business," he continues, "your girl can run it without any help from you. You spend the day playing pinochle—with a marked deck, according to some sources." Then Jason leans forward and says very softly, "I want you for my Watson because you can live a role, not just declaim lines somebody has written for you. Only an artist can recognize another artist, and I recognize in you a greater Dr. Watson than Quavell."

"That wouldn't be difficult," I concede. "How Quavell can palm off that Canadian accent of his as English I'll never know. I don't wish to brag, but did I ever tell you how my English accent once fooled Eva Le Gallienne at an audition?"

"If you had the right costume, a fake mustache, and—" he starts.

"Fake mustache!" I interject. "That might do for Quavell, but if you want me to play the role you'll have to wait until I grow a genuine mustache. And about a costume: I must have a tweed jacket, belted all around—"

Waystoane exclaims, "Done!" and shakes my hand.

So a few weeks later Waystoane inserts his ad in the papers and the following day we open our doors for business. For the first thirty seconds it looks like we're starting with more customers than we can handle, because some fifteen or twenty people are waiting for us. But they turn out to be reporters looking for a colorful human-inter-

est story as a follow-up to our advertisement.

Waystoane invites them in graciously. "Ah, the assiduous chroniclers of our daily activities! May I present my old friend, Sherman Holmeyer, whose convincing portrayal of my trusted colleague will add fresh luster, I am confident, to a secondary but essential role."

With that the barrage starts. Some of the old-timers are helpful, asking Waystoane friendly questions about his career. But most of them are looking for laughs for their readers and they don't mind spilling Waystoane's blood doing it. The worst of the lot is a lady reporter from a picture magazine, attended by not one but two photographers. You know the type—good-looking, wearing a smart suit and a forty-dollar hat with tall feathers. She is aware that she's as good a reporter as any man in the room and that sex is working for her, too.

"Mr. Waystoane," she asks sweetly, "tell me, if you had played Dr. Casey in television, would you now consider yourself competent to perform brain surgery?"

Waystoane, like a good trooper, lets her get the full laugh before he answers, "By such talent as I possess, I have brought to life for untold theatre-goers a great literary creation, Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Now, in seeking to keep him alive a little longer, I am being true both to the character and to myself and so I cannot be false to any man."

Some of the reporters applaud and the rest are busy writing down this mangled bit from Polonius when there is a vigorous rapping on the office door. Waystoane says briskly, "Unless I am mistaken, we have a client. Let us not keep him waiting."

I open the door and in steps a young man, about twenty-five. He is nice-looking, maybe even handsome, but the effect is spoiled by his sloppy sweater, soiled dungarees, and shabby sneakers. He looks around for a moment, then spots Waystoane in the Inverness cape and deer stalker, and inquires respectfully, "Have I the pleasure of addressing the celebrated consulting detective?"

Waystoane nods modestly and says, "You are most kind. Have you met my trusted friend and colleague, Mr.—?"

"Castle, Harry Castle," the young man says. "I have come to request your help, sir. I have—"

"Hold it, Mr. Castle," interrupts the lady reporter. "This is an opportunity for Mr. Waystoane to give us a demonstration of his deductive powers by telling us all about you."

Waystoane does not answer her but arches his fingers together and studies the young man for barely five seconds. "I am afraid I can scarcely tell you anything not already obvious to you," he says diffidently. "Other than that Mr. Castle is a recent graduate of Harvard, that he has broken with his family

over an excessive tendency toward romantic attachments, and that he is employed at manual labor in the construction industry, I am unable to draw any firm conclusions."

This is a familiar cue, so I splutter a little. "Really! Although I am familiar with your powers of deduction, I cannot see how—"

Waystoane interrupts blandly, "Precisely. You look but you do not see. If you will observe, there is a ring on Mr. Castle's left hand. Perhaps you recall my paper for the Police Chiefs' Convention—*Some Suggestions for the Identification and Classification of Popular Insignia, with Special Reference to College Rings, Greek Letter Pins, and Fraternal Badges*. Mr. Castle's ring is Harvard, Class of '60, without question.

"The marked muscular development of his right hand and the calluses on both palms indicate manual labor with a two-handed tool such as a pickax or shovel. Bits of cement have adhered to the bottoms of Mr. Castle's trousers—to your eye perhaps they were mud but to the trained eye there is an unmistakable difference between plain mud and Portland cement. The construction industry is an unavoidable conclusion.

"As for the rupture with his family," continues Waystoane, "how else are we to account for a young man of excellent education and refined bearing being in the impoverished circumstances which his

clothes indicate? Was it drink? The clarity of his complexion denies it. Gambling? Possibly, but in so handsome a youth what is a more likely cause of parental concern than a too lively interest in the opposite sex? Really," Waystoane concludes, "nothing could have been simpler."

Young Castle is obligingly shaking his head in wonderment when the lady reporter cuts in, "Is he right, Mr. Castle?"

He hesitates a moment. "Well, practically. I did graduate from Harvard. And my Dad is sort of peeved about my coming to New York to be a sculptor. I guess maybe Dad does think it's just an excuse for playing around. He'd like me to come into his company—he's president of Pegasus Oil, you know—as regional manager and learn the business from the bottom up. But Dad's a good sort and sends me a nice check every month. I only dress this way because—well, everybody in my circle does.

"However, Mr. Waystoane is dead right about the cement," he continues admiringly. "That's what I sculp in—cement. It came to me one day while I was watching some men digging up a street with pneumatic drills. Concrete takes on a very expressive, dynamic texture that way. Of course, it's real work using a pneumatic drill on concrete but I'm getting used to it."

The lady reporter is looking at our handsome visitor with a rich

father the way a cat looks at a fledgling bird that has fallen from its nest, and says, "Oh, that sounds so virile! I'd dearly love to view your work. I don't have even a teeny-weensy bit of talent myself but I majored in Fine Arts at Radcliffe and I am mad for sculpture. Perhaps my magazine, which is really very high-class although we do have eight million readers, could do a picture story on you."

Waystoane tries to regain the spotlight. "I trust that you did not wish to consult me about your artistic theories, Mr. Castle," he says icily.

"Oh, no," Castle says. "I urgently require your professional assistance. My entire career has been threatened by an event so incredible that I fear to relate it to you lest you consider me out of my senses."

"Pray control your agitation, Mr. Castle. My colleague and I have unraveled many a seemingly inexplicable circumstance. But I shall be better able to judge whether I can assist you after hearing your narrative. I suggest that you omit no detail, however trifling or insignificant it may seem to you." Looking at the reporters, Waystoane adds, "Permit me first to escort our other guests to the door."

"I'm not taking one step," says the lady reporter. "I intend to hear the whole story." There is a supporting chorus from the others and Castle says, "It's okay with me. Perhaps the press can help."

"As you deem best," says Waystoane graciously.

Castle resumes his story. "Two days ago I finished my greatest work. It is my masterpiece—a powerful abstraction nine feet high, which I called simply, 'Mood.' I cannot describe how long and arduously I toiled to achieve it. When you sculp with a pneumatic drill, you can't just erase or paint over your mistakes. Take off one tiny bit too much and it's back to the cement mixer for a fresh batch of concrete. As soon as my sculpture was completed, I invited my uncle to visit my studio to give me his opinion. Perhaps you have heard of him—Grenville Castle?"

Waystoane nods. "The distinguished diplomat in our foreign service who retired, I believe, last year?"

"The very same. But in the world of art he is even better known as an avid and wealthy collector. Yesterday evening he called to inspect my work. To put it briefly, my uncle fell in love with my masterpiece and offered to purchase it immediately for any figure I would care to name. I regretfully refused, for the work was to be the *chef-d'oeuvre* of my first public showing, which I expect will be held shortly."

I decide it's time Watson had a line or two of dialogue, so I ask obtusely, "Your uncle appreciated, no doubt, the necessity for your refusal?"

"On the contrary, sir," replies

Castle. "My uncle is a very strong-willed man, not accustomed to the slightest frustration of his collector's passions. The more I sought to placate him, the more angry he became. I shall never forget the look of fury on his face as he left. His parting words were, 'Harry, you'll regret your obstinacy. I shall obtain your sculpture, by fair means or foul!'"

Castle pauses and Waystoane prompts his client. "Has your uncle made any effort to enforce his threat? Or may we hope that he has since regretted his intemperate outburst?"

"You shall decide for yourself," Castle answers. "Disturbed by the argument and unable to relax, I decided to put the entire incident from my mind by visiting an exceptionally attractive model whose services I have sought without success." The lady reporter frowns. "We went to dinner and returned to her apartment where we negotiated for a while." The lady reporter's frown becomes a scowl. "In all, I was gone from my studio some three or four hours."

Castle stops, looks at us, and says slowly, "When I returned to my studio, my sculpture was gone. Vanished, disappeared! Nothing disturbed, nothing wrecked or smashed—simply a sculpture missing. But my sculpture was nine feet high and weighed about four tons. Am I out of my mind? How could it possibly have happened?"

"Fortunately your loss is covered by insurance?" Waystoane asks.

Castle shakes his head. "Oh, no. Insurance companies won't write policies for unsuccessful artists. I am afraid they believe too many of us would be tempted to destroy our own creations for the proceeds."

"But you have reported your loss to the appropriate authorities?"

"I think so," says Castle, "but I'm really not sure. The precinct detective urged me to sleep it off and then come back tomorrow if I still want to report it."

Waystoane starts to pace the floor, his face registering intense concentration. It's a great performance and the reporters are so absorbed they even stop taking notes. Suddenly Waystoane becomes stern and demands of Castle, "Are you certain you have omitted no detail? Some random happening, some petty deviation from the ordinary?"

Castle thinks for a moment before answering, "Nothing, except that the thieves threw some garbage around."

"You mean, they knocked over your garbage pail?"

"Oh, no. They brought their own garbage with them."

"What kind of garbage?"

"Oh, just garbage. Right where my sculpture had been. A few twigs, some chicken wings—"

"Plucked or unplucked chicken wings?"

"The feathers were still on, if that's what you mean."

Waystoane chortles and rubs his hands in satisfaction. "Capital, my dear fellow! You are most helpful. One more detail: would you know whether your uncle has ever visited India?"

"Why, yes," replies Castle, looking as puzzled as the rest of us. "He began his diplomatic career there many years ago, as a vice-consul in Bombay. But what has that to do with it?"

Waystoane turns to me and says, "Kindly hand me the fourth volume of von Schlumperberg's *Devilcraft Among the Peoples of the World*. I believe you'll find it behind those test tubes propping up the Buttner filter."

I do find a book there but it is strictly a prop with the title, *Yearbook of Steam Railway Statistics*, 1921. Waystoane takes it from me quickly, hiding the title. He flips through the book as if searching for a specific reference, then stops and peruses a page. Finally, he says, "My memory was not at fault. The fakirs of India and Pakistan claim to possess the powers of levitation. Certain charms are necessary to produce this phenomenon, the most customary of which are chicken wings, twigs of certain rapid-growing vines, and—"

This is a typical Watson cue, so I interrupt. "Surely you would not have us believe in such superstitious nonsense?"

Castle comes to Waystoane's defense. "That's as good an explana-

tion as any I've been able to think up. I told you the whole affair was utterly incredible." He turns to Waystoane, "Sir, I am not a rich man but I will give whatever I possess for the return of my statue."

Waystoane replies as gallantly as Holmes ever did, "If I do assist you, it will not be for the reward you offer but because there are one or two aspects of this challenging affair that interest me. I am quite agreeable to making some inquiries on your behalf."

The lady reporter takes Castle by the arm and asks Waystoane, "Then why don't we go to his studio right now? There may be some hot clues lying around this very minute."

"If we are fortunate enough to obtain a two-wheeler—I mean a cab—promptly," says Waystoane to me, "perhaps we can still attend the reception in my honor this afternoon at the Saudi Arabian Embassy. I have been informally advised that I shall receive the Order of Keeper of the Royal Camels for my little share in recovering the Ambassador's false teeth, fished from his attaché case by agents of a nameless foreign power an hour before His Excellency was due to make a decisive speech to the Security Council. While I should not regret being late for the Embassy ceremonies, I am most anxious to sample the buffet of roast lamb, shishkabob, and pilof, for His Excellency's cook has a considerable reputation

where spices are concerned. Shall we go?"

It's a terrific first-act curtain speech, and we leave to find cabs with the same sense of pleasant anticipation that a theater audience has at intermission. Castle gets into the first cab, escorted by the lady reporter, and I get Waystoane into a cab with me for some urgent consultations.

Waystoane is exuberant. "Did you see the way I kept them spellbound right up to my exit? Tell me frankly, Sherm, was I ever in greater form?"

I groan, "What about the mystery? What happens if we don't solve it?"

"Don't worry, Sherm. I'll top myself in the next scene."

Castle's studio is a dilapidated, one-story warehouse somewhere on the West Side, between Greenwich Village and the North River docks. The young sculptor apologizes as he admits the crowd. "It's really not suitable for entertaining but it's awfully roomy."

Inside, it looks as if he's been preparing to build a second Panama Canal. There's a gas-engine cement mixer, a tremendous air compressor, some pneumatic drills, half a dozen wheelbarrows, and an assortment of sledges, masonry hammers, and other heavy tools. Against one wall, in neat, even stacks, are a couple of hundred bags of cement, and in one corner

there's a mountainous pile of sand right up to the ceiling. Everywhere there are heaps of steel reinforcing bars and heavy-wire mesh of the kind used on construction jobs. But the far corner is fixed up very pleasantly as a living room. There are some easy chairs, a couple of lamps, a portable bar, and some Japanese screens behind which I deduce he has a bed and some kind of bathroom.

Castle drags Waystoane to the center of the floor. "Now this is the exact spot," he says, pointing to a clear space at his feet. "That's where my masterpiece was the last time I saw it. And there's the garbage I told you about."

Waystoane takes out a magnifying glass and a tape measure. He measures the windows, the door, the walls, and everything else that is capable of linear measurement; everything he can't measure with the tape, he examines with the lens.

It has always been a great piece of stage-business, so it's a pity that I am the only one watching Waystoane. All the reporters are occupied with a private investigation of their own into the quality of Castle's liquor. And Castle himself is busy showing the lady reporter his remaining works of art, which consist of large chunks of odd-shaped concrete.

Finally Waystoane turns his attention to one of the chicken wings lying on the floor. He studies it for a moment under the magnifying

glass and then I see by his face he's really excited. I sidle over to him and whisper, "You've made a discovery, Jason?"

"Chicken lice," he whispers back. "We'd be taking unnecessary chances if we failed to bathe thoroughly tonight, Sherm. I believe they will eat hair if they can't find feathers."

Our client joins the conference. "Have you learned anything?" he asks.

"Only that I require a ladder or a scaffold to examine that huge crack in the ceiling." Waystoane points to the largest of numerous cracks in the ancient ceiling, where a whole section of plaster is missing.

"I don't have either," says the mystified sculptor. "But all those ceiling cracks were there before my statue was stolen."

"Were they there when you moved in?"

"Oh, some were. But additional plaster does fall all the time. It's caused by the vibration from the cement mixer and the drilling I do."

"That explains it to my satisfaction," says Waystoane. "Then I believe, Mr. Castle, there is nothing more to be learned by prolonging our stay. A visit to your uncle is now in order. Will you inform him that we shall call upon him tomorrow afternoon? Goodbye, my dear sir. You shall hear from me in due course."

I fall in behind Waystoane who is marching for the door but sud-

denly Jason stops and turns back to Castle. "Oh, by the way, Mr. Castle, do you have any bubble gum or lollipops?"

Castle looks dumfounded, but he manages to answer politely, "No, I'm sorry. Can I offer you a sardine sandwich instead? Or I may have a bit of liver paté. On toasted crackers, perhaps?"

"No, no," Waystoane replies brusquely. "Good day to you."

As soon as we're alone out on the sidewalk, I explode. "Jason, I hate to say this to a seasoned trouper but you're overacting and not just a little, either. What's this gum-and-lollipop routine?"

"As I do not have my own company of Baker Street Irregulars, I thought some juvenile treats would come in handy while you questioned the neighborhood children about any large trucks or cranes parked here last night," Jason explains.

"That's not a bad idea," I concede. "Let's go buy a dollar's worth of candy."

"No, it's extravagant and, on second thought, unnecessary. It's more important that you go back to the office to await any additional clients."

"And you?" I ask.

"I do not think I could employ my time more profitably than in contemplating the Chagall stained-glass windows currently on exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. And while I am there, I shall

have a word with the curator. He feels himself under a special obligation to me, you recall, for recovering the four Buster Keaton comedies which had been abstracted from the Museum's film archives by an unscrupulous television producer." With this, he hails himself a cab and leaves me on the sidewalk, admiring his second-act curtain.

It is the next afternoon before I see Jason Waystoane again. When I do, it causes me to speculate on how safe it is for me to associate with him. He comes slouching into the office, dressed—I know it's not the right word—in a torn T-shirt, ragged denim shorts, and a pair of Japanese sandals. A short, fake beard covers a full 180° arc of his chin and he is wearing black horn-rimmed spectacles. The top of his head is literally crowned with a blond crew-cut wig. This apparition taps me on the chest and squeaks in a thin, false voice, "Hey there, square, is this the pad of cool cat Waystoane?"

Who am I to spoil Waystoane's happy illusion that even his Watson cannot penetrate this master disguise? So I growl, "Take your unwashed hands off me, kid. We don't want any beatniks around here."

Waystoane straightens up, removes the wig and glasses, bows low, and declaims in Shakespearian tones, "Jason Waystoane, in person

and at your service." I simulate astonishment beautifully and Waystoane beams.

"Took me in completely, you did," I admit. "But one terse question: Why?"

"To appear like a typical lounge of the neighborhood while keeping our client's studio under surveillance this morning. I did not wish to call attention to myself," Waystone explains.

For achieving inconspicuousness Waystoane's disguise can be ranked with holding a polo match on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier to fool the enemy into thinking it is just a grassy meadow. But I restrain myself and inquire, "Did you learn anything?"

"Mainly that the traffic in narcotics must be increasing. In the few hours I stood there, three people tried to sell me reefers and one nicely dressed woman kept offering me fifty dollars for a packet of heroin. Very shocking, Sherm."

"It's more likely you succeeded in attracting the attention of undercover agents of the narcotics squad. But what about the missing sculpture?"

"Not a sign. However, our client is happily under siege by crowds of art lovers and curiosity seekers. In fact, the Fire Department has placed a man on duty to limit attendance to forty at a time."

"So when do we start doing something to solve the case?" I demand.

"Action has always been better suited to your temperament, my dear colleague. Very well, give me a moment to remove all trace of this disguise and we shall make a call upon our suspect."

The townhouse of Mr. Grenville Castle, the uncle of our client, is in the East Seventies and when we are admitted by a butler it is like walking into a stage set. The drawing room where we await our host is paneled in walnut, the chandeliers are real crystal, and the walls are covered with original oil paintings. I am considerably impressed but Waystoane behaves as calmly as if the whole thing is fabricated from props and painted scenery.

Castle himself appears to have been type-cast for the role of wealthy diplomat and art fancier. About 65, he is very distinguished in appearance and obviously nobody to trifle with. He does not offer to shake hands with us but looks us over deliberately and says in zero tones, "In deference to my nephew, I have consented to receive you in my home. I cannot see, however, what purpose it may serve."

Waystoane, matching the frigid manner, replies, "What good may come depends entirely on you. Are you aware that your nephew's prize sculpture has vanished?"

Our suspect smiles blandly. "I believe Harry has spoken of it."

"Did you not make a threat to secure that sculpture for yourself?"

Castle smiles again. "I cannot re-

call exactly the words I spoke in a moment of temper. Perhaps I said something of the sort."

"Then surely you realize," says Waystoane, "that suspicion for its disappearance rests on you."

Castle snaps his fingers. "Pooh," he says. "So much for suspicions. If you ever find some real evidence come to me—or go to the police, for that matter. But to discuss your suspicions is to waste my time, which I prefer to devote to my memoirs. You interrupted me in the middle of a most amusing chapter about the tariff concessions which I wheedled from the Gaekwar of Baroda in the fall of 1922." Castle rises to terminate our tête-à-tête.

Waystoane remains seated. Quietly he asks, "Don't you wish to take advantage of the present opportunity to confess? Surely it would be more advisable for a man in your elevated position to make a clean breast of the matter."

Castle's face turns a rich, royal purple but he says nothing. He just tugs violently at the bell-rope and waits for the butler. Then he says to the butler, "Arvis, I'm afraid we have been deceived. These are not visitors but only a pair of unemployed actors in quest of an audition, and without even the benefit of grease paint. Show them out and make certain you lock the street door."

Waystoane rises, draws himself up to his full height, and replies haughtily, "Since your hospitality

is deficient in courtesy, perhaps I should permit you to sample mine. You may call at my office tomorrow at ten in the forenoon. If the continuance of your hitherto eminent career holds any attraction for you, it would be prudent of you to attend without fail. I bid you good day."

As soon as we leave the house, Waystoane lets himself go. He keeps muttering angrily, "Unemployed actors! Without grease paint!" and each time he repeats the phrases, he gets angrier. He finally permits me to calm him down and says, "The time has come to put an end to this little game. Communicate with our client and arrange for him to be present also." He sighs. "I would have preferred to drag the case out a few days longer—to increase the dramatic values, just as Holmes did—but I will not permit Grenville Castle to think he can succeed in humiliating me."

I ask cautiously, "Am I to infer that you have solved the case?"

"Certainly," Waystoane snaps. "Am I interpreting Hamlet or am I interpreting Holmes? A few minutes' scrutiny of the studio was all that I required. It was really quite obvious."

As I am still in the dark about such details as how the sculpture was removed and by whom, with concealed cunning I suggest, "Let's compare notes, Jason. What is your theory?"

Waystoane glares at me. "Watson

never gets the solution before it is revealed to the client. Have you no respect for the classics, Sherm?"

"No man has more. But please remember that I am a ten per cent. partner, unlike Watson who had no financial interest in Holmes's detection business. So I think it only proper—"

"It might be best if you brought your old army revolver," Jason continues absently. "There may be a struggle."

"I haven't got a revolver, Jason. And let's be clear about this: I'm willing to accommodate you only as far as bringing a golf club, if you wish. The way I use it, a Number Two iron is not such a bad little weapon at close quarters. But I will not bring a firearm, not even an arquebus."

"Without wishing to carp," Waystoane replies scathingly, "I may say that you do not seem to have caught the precise flavor of Dr. Watson. Do work a little harder at achieving the inner spirit of his character." And with that he departs.

Naturally, I spend a sleepless night and arrive at the office quite early. But Waystoane is there before me. He's busy toasting some test tubes over the Bunsen burner. "I'm on the track!" he exclaims. "I am developing a reagent which can distinguish infallibly between the stains of ketchup and lipstick."

Somewhat annoyed by this persiflage while I still am in the dark

about the case, I suggest, "Try tasting them, Jason. It's always worked for me."

Promptly at ten our sculptor appears, accompanied by his uncle. The uncle is sputtering incoherently but Waystoane ignores him and asks the young man, "Do you still wish to recover your sculpture?"

"Oh, sure," he says. "More than ever, although overnight I've become a success. I never realized how much a little publicity could do for an aspiring artist. I've sold every one of my works—a Fort Worth cattleman bought the last half dozen at five hundred dollars each. Three galleries are competing to have me do a one-man show and I'm pouring more cement tonight."

"In that case," Waystoane replies, "you may enjoy the additional publicity which I have planned for you. I am about to call in the press to advise them that you are a hoaxster."

"What do you mean?" our client cries out, turning pale.

"I mean, sir, that you contrived a preposterous story, added a hint of the supernatural with the aid of a poultry market, and arranged the support of your uncle to supply some tincture of credibility. Knowing the natural interest of the press in my activities, you sought to exploit my sympathy to secure the vulgar notoriety which today is such a superior substitute for an earned reputation." Waystoane folds his arms across his chest and

stands looking sternly at our client, who breaks into piteous sobbing.

Our client's uncle is also upset, but he is tougher sinew. "We have nothing to fear, Harry," he tells his nephew. "How can he prove his theory? And if he dares repeat it to the press, we shall sue him for libel."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Castle," says Waystoane. "Directly upon hearing your nephew's story, my suspicions were aroused. But I obtained concrete proof—the pun *is* intentional—as soon as I examined his studio. He does not possess a ladder or a scaffold, as he admitted before witnesses. I believe this is sufficient proof that he could not have constructed a sculpture nine feet high and that his narrative of its disappearance was only a clumsy fabrication."

Waystoane smiles at us just the way he did in the movies when he announced that the crown jewels stolen by Professor Moriarty were only paste substitutes while the real gems are still safely hidden in the royal plum pudding.

Our client is now so broken down that he confesses. "It was your own advertisement which gave me the idea of staging a mystery to attract public attention. Believe me, I meant no harm to anyone."

The uncle nods at Jason and says, "I'm afraid I underestimated your powers, Mr. Waystoane, and it is only fair that I should pay the

penalty." He pulls out his check book. "What will your silence cost me?"

Sherlock Holmes would have whipped out a riding crop in answer to such an insult, but Waystoane says weakly, "Ha, you would try to bribe me! Ha!" It is not convincing and his quivering nostrils give him away.

"Is one thousand dollars a fair—er—price?"

Waystoane hesitates, and then says, "True, there is no public interest which demands my protection. After all, if people wish to buy as works of art the same chunks of cement they can pick up free at the nearest sewer excavation, who am I to interfere with culture? On the other hand," he continues, "I have my reputation to consider. I must give the press the solution or they will believe the case has been too much for my abilities."

I come to the rescue. "Suppose that young Castle here prepares a letter to you which acknowledges the usefulness of your inquiries but requests that you withdraw lest the resulting scandal do greater harm than the original crime."

"Bravo!" exclaims Waystoane. "A capital idea, old fellow, and very well put."

Encouraged, I continue. "Of course, it's unthinkable that we should accept money as payment for our silence." Now it is Waystoane who turns pale. "However," I continue quickly, "our client ad-

mits he could not have sold his sculptures without our help, so it is only fair we should receive a sales commission."

"Bravissimo!" Waystoane cries. "Once again, dear colleague, you have contributed not inconsiderably to the satisfactory outcome of a case. I really could not do without you." He turns to our client. "Shall we say fifty per cent.?"

"Of course. I don't wish to hag-

gle," says the young sculptor timidly, "but isn't fifty per cent. a bit high?"

"No," says Waystoane, "because I'm going to throw in a year's supply of fresh honey for you and your uncle. Just give your check to my colleague."

Now I ask you: is that bad for a final curtain-speech? . . . So at least you could admit you enjoyed the blintzes and sour cream, no?

**There's an
S&M Handbook
for all your
do-it-yourself
projects**

Take a few moments to look through this list of S&M Handbooks. You'll find several books that are tailored to your needs and your specific interests. And, you'll find these enjoyable and profitable reading. You'll want these, and more. Your cost, postpaid, is only \$1.00 each. Order yours now. Circle the number below.

590—Home Appliance Repair
591—Furniture Handbook
592—1001 How-To Ideas
593—Boat Builder's Handbook
594—Science Fair Projects
595—Radio-TV Experimenter
596—Car Repair Handbook
597—Garden Handbook
598—Home Repair Handbook
599—Camping Handbook
600—Inventor's Handbook
601—Water Sports Handbook
602—Engine Handbook
603—Hunting & Fishing Handbook
604a—Kitchen & Bath Projects

605a—Do-It-Yourself Plumbing
606—Surplus Projects Handbook
607—Boat Builder's Handbook
608—Science Experimenter
609—Radio-TV Experimenter
610—Junior Mechanics Handbook
611—Home Workshop Handbook
612—Car Repair Handbook
613—Electrical Handbook
614—Ceramic Handbook
615—Home Modernization Handbook
616—New Cars 1983—
617—Magic Handbook
618—Woodworker's Encyclopedia
619—Home Built Power Tools

**SCIENCE and
MECHANICS**

HANDBOOKS

**505 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK 22, N.Y.**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

50 BEST-SELLING MYSTERIES

NOW ONLY **\$5.95**

IF MYSTERY IS YOUR OYSTER
FEAST ON 50 BEST SELLERS!



- 6117 **Dead Man's Tale**, Ellery Queen
- 6075 **Killer On The Turpike**
Wm. P. McGivern
- 6111 **Murder After A Fashion**, Spencer Dean
- 6024 **Beware The Curves**, A. A. Fair
- 6052 **Cat Among The Pigeons**
Agatha Christie
- 6101 **The Savage Streets**, Wm. P. McGivern
- 6095 **Some Slips Don't Show**, A. A. Fair
- 6094 **Murder On Wall Street**, John B. Ethan
- 6087 **Black Is For Dying**
Johnathan Latimer
- 6078 **The Asphalt Jungle**, W. R. Burnett
- C • 423 **Murder Of Roger Ackroyd**
Agatha Christie
- C • 4222 **Hickory Dickory Death**, Agatha Christie
- C • 421 **Funerals Are Fatal**, Agatha Christie
- C • 420 **Dead Man's Folly**, Agatha Christie
- C • 405 **Multi Million Dollar Murder**
F. van Wyck Mason
- GC • 110 **Journey Into Crime**, Don Whitehead
- GC • 94 **A Matter Of Conviction**, Evan Hunter
- M • 5027 **The Great Imposter**, Robert Crichton
- M • 4253 **Lady, Lady, I Did It**, Ed McBain
- M • 4252 **Bodyguard**, H. L. Gold
- M • 4251 **Start Screaming Murder**
Talmadge Powell
- M • 4234 **Hardly A Man Is Now Alive**
Jean Ridgeway
- M • 4233 **A Madman Behind Me**, Talmadge Powell
- M • 4229 **See Them Dying**, Ed McBain
- M • 4228 **Pretty Miss Murder**, W. T. Ballard
- M • 4227 **The Golden Frame**, Mari Wolf
- M • 4222 **Wanton For Murder**, Henry Klinger
- M • 4221 **The Unspeakable**, Stephen Ransome
- M • 4217 **Double Jeopardy**, Edwin Lanham
- M • 4205 **The Watcher**, Dolores Hitchens
- M • 4199 **The Thin Man**, Dashiell Hammett
- M • 4198 **The Dain Curse**, Dashiell Hammett
- M • 4196 **The Saint To The Rescue**
Leslie Charteris
- 6153 **Murder Up My Sleeve**
Erle Stanley Gardner
- 6138 **Mark Kilby Stands Alone**
Robert Caine Frazer
- 6136 **Spanish Cape Mystery**, Ellery Queen
- 6135 **Siamese Cat Mystery**, Ellery Queen
- 6134 **Roman Hat Mystery**, Ellery Queen
- 6133 **Halfway House**, Ellery Queen
- 6132 **Minute Mysteries**, Austin Ripley
- 6130 **Chinese Orange Mystery**, Ellery Queen
- 6125 **Mystery Of The Blue Train**
Agatha Christie
- 6124 **The Count Of Nine**, A. A. Fair
- 6114 **Murder With Mirrors**, Agatha Christie
- M • 4164 **Big City Crimes**
Harold Danforth & James Doran
- M • 4166 **'Til Death**, Ed McBain
- M • 4178 **The Real Gene Goose**, George Bagby
- M • 4150 **Killer's Wedge**, Ed McBain
- M • 4118 **The D.A.'s Man**
Harold Danforth & James Doran
- M • 4096 **Murder Of A Wife**, Henry Kutner

OFFER GOOD UNTIL MAR. 1, 1963

February 1963

MYSTERY POCKET CLUB
230 West 17th Street (8th floor)
New York 11, N. Y.

I enclose _____ (\$5.95 for each set of 50 books) which will be sent to me prepaid. (Please send check or money order.) I understand that if I am not completely satisfied, I may return my books within 14 days for a complete refund.

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ ZONE _____

STATE _____

The publisher reserves the right to substitute when listed titles are out of print.



BEST MYSTERIES OF THE MONTH

recommended by ANTHONY BOUCHER

Mark Van Doren is one of America's distinguished poets and scholars . . . and, as EQMM readers well know, an equally distinguished craftsman of the subtly illuminating crime story. His *COLLECTED STORIES* (Hill & Wang, \$5.95), in which he gathers his 41 favorites from his decades of activity, includes a number of splendid entries from EQMM, along with a wide variety of stories of other types to delight and refresh you.

★★★★ **THE CHINA GOVERNESS**, by *Margery Allingham* (Doubleday, \$3.95)

Mr. Campion and Sup. Luke solve a family's murders in 1961 and 1949, in Miss Allingham's most satisfying novel in many years.

★★★ **DEATH AND CHICANERY**, by *Philip MacDonald* (Crime Club, \$3.50)

Two excellently meaty novelets (one from EQMM) in MacDonald's best manner outweigh a couple of negligible short stories.

★★★ **BORN VICTIM**, by *Hillary Waugh* (Crime Club, \$3.50)

Astute smalltown police chief Fred Fellows traces a missing and doomed teen-ager, in one of the best current procedure series.

★★★ **THE CROWN OF NIGHT**, by *Pierre Audemars* (Harper & Row, \$3.50)

M. Pinaud of the Sûreté returns in a transparent puzzle, but a quietly humorous and charming book.

★★★ **NIGHT OF SHADOW**, by *Frances & Richard Lockridge* (Lippincott, \$3.50)

Politics-by-assassination overflows a Latin American republic to menace Mahattanites, in a tight and lively thriller.

★★★ **TRUST THE SAINT**, by *Leslie Charteris* (Crime Club, \$3.50)

6 new long short stories of the brighter buccaneer, with many characteristic touches to enchant the Saint-addict.

There are few remarkable cases among the 16 studied in Walter N. Trenerry's *MURDER IN MINNESOTA* (Minnesota Historical Society, \$3.95); but the book is an exemplary treatment of regional history as revealed by the spotlight of crime. Would that the 49 other state historical societies might follow Minnesota's noble example!

***The famous poem
behind the crime . . .***

RICHARD CORY

by EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread:
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Roy Harvey Pearce, in his remarkable book titled THE CONTINUITY OF AMERICAN POETRY, reminds us that Edwin Arlington Robinson's Tilbury Town is the underworld of Thoreau's Walden and Walt Whitman's Paumanok . . .

THE RICHARD CORY MURDER CASE

by MANLY WADE WELLMAN

BEFORE NOON WE WERE DRINKING, as usual, around the table in the back room of "The Chrysalis." But no talk, for once, about how right the Supreme Court was in outlawing a Federal income tax, or whether McKinley could beat William Jennings Bryan in November. Talk, instead, about how Richard Cory had gone home the night before, on a calm summer night, and put a bullet through his head.

We remember only a handful of Tilbury townsmen there. The man Flammonde at the table's head; lovesick Luke Havergal, listening as for a soft voice that never spoke; big Cliff Klingenhagen, sipping beer; Charles Carville with his insufficient eyes and insufficient talk; Morgan the fiddler, whose son was a genius going to Harvard on money that Flammonde had wheeled here and there for him. And a couple of others. And why, we kept asking, *why*?

Richard Cory had been rich—yes, richer than a king. He had glittered when he walked, and was admirably schooled in every grace.

"He was a gentleman from sole to crown," said Klingenhagen; and "Now he's shot dead," said Flammonde's mournfully musical voice. Flammonde wore a neat suit of khaki, from India maybe, and his face was sadly, pinkly smooth beneath his gray curls.

"Many a woman mourns today," said Morgan, and we nodded. Richard had always fluttered women's pulses when he said, "Good-morning."

"Leonora—" began Luke Havergal, and choked. All last flame-leafed autumn he'd walked past her house by the churchyard's western gate, hoping to hear her call, and never hearing.

We sympathized. We all loved Leonora, too. "A woman cursed with happiness," Miniver Cheevy had once called her. She was rich, beautiful, healthy, clever. Luke never got a glance from her green eye. First she'd favored the Reverend Heironymus Mackintosh—Tilbury's citizens had such re-sounding names; then, for a few weeks, she'd looked at Flammonde.

Women, young and old, were fond of looking at him. After that she'd yearned for Richard Cory, but he glittered after other ladies, maybe marking Leonora for the future. Now he had no future. Nor did she—if the future meant Richard Cory.

"Her windows are shut," said Flammonde. "The servant girl doesn't answer the bell. She must be prone with—"

A cough, and in stamped Miniver Cheevy.

Even in August, Miniver wore a frock coat. He hoped it gave him a courtier look; but with his bitter gauntness, his scowling bright eyes, his lean teeth and lean nose, he reminded us more of a young Ebenezer Scrooge. He sat down and called for a bottle of wine. Then he opened a big silver-handled knife and began to pare a peach.

"Who said Leonora's prone?" he sneered. "She's alive, I conjecture."

He poured wine in a tumbler and sliced the peach into it. "Death doesn't come from things like love," he said. "It comes from things like bullets."

"Why did Richard do it?" wondered Morgan again.

"Why should he do it?" wondered Miniver, and ate a dripping slice of peach from his knife point. "When it comes to that, might not somebody else have done it for him?"

"The constable says suicide,"

Flammonde reminded us. "Richard lay with the pistol in his hand, and the hole over his right ear was powder-smudged."

"He didn't leave a suicide note," said Miniver, taking another winy morsel of peach, "though he did leave a vast deal of money."

"I drew his will," continued Miniver. He practised law, though he felt that legal disputes should be left to trial by combat. "I took it to his house last night. We had dinner, and before his servants left for the night they signed as witnesses."

We looked sharp at that. "How did Richard act?" asked Morgan.

"Troubled. An anonymous note had been pushed under his door." Miniver's teeth flashed in what wasn't a smile. "It called him heartless, ungrateful, said he'd be killed on the main street of Tilbury, to his own disgrace. It was in a woman's handwriting."

Luke winced, as if only one woman in the world had handwriting.

"Richard didn't fear death, only disgrace," went on Miniver. "He was armed, but I told him to put away his pistol. What honor is there in duelling with a woman?"

"And you didn't stay with him," chided Flammonde gently. "You might have saved his life."

"He wanted me to leave—expected another visitor, the one man in Tilbury he could trust, he said. I wonder who that could be."

"Who gets his money?" asked Charles Carville.

"A thousand dollars to Flammonde. Morgan's son gets another thousand, to finish at Harvard. Bequests to churches. His land goes to Tilbury for a park. Most of his money to a college down south in Rhode Island."

"And you?" prompted Flammonde.

"Nothing," snapped Miniver. "And though I scorn gold, I'm sore annoyed without it. I can't live by cadging, like some I know."

That was insolent. Flammonde borrowed graciously and none begrudged him, except Miniver. But Flammonde smiled forgiveness.

"He might have left something to Leonora," he said; then, quietly proud, "I loved her."

"So did I," murmured Luke.

Miniver ate the last slice of peach. "You talk as if she's dead, too." He drained the tumbler. "She'll live. When she wept over Richard, I told her, 'It won't last very long. It never does. We'll all get over it.'"

We were as shocked as though he'd disparaged a sacred name—as indeed he had.

"Flammonde says that the hole in his head was powder-smudged," pursued Miniver. "Are you all as stupid as you seem? A suicide sets the pistol firm to the place. The powder flies in after the bullet. There's no smudge left."

"Are you serious?" cried Carville.

"By heaven, that may be so," said Flammonde. "But if Richard didn't shoot himself—I hope, Miniver, you're not pleading guilty."

"That would be pleading guilty to a nineteenth century conscience," said Miniver, "and I despise the nineteenth century. Thomas de Quincey's best claim to classic gentility is his consideration of murder, not as a crime but as a fine art. It was so considered by Hassan ben Sabath, a Moslem tyrant of note; by Cesare Borgia; and by the accomplished and fascinating Catherine de' Medici."

"Miniver loves the Medici," breathed Flammonde, "albeit he has never seen one."

"Who here ever saw a Medici?" demanded Miniver, laying down his knife on the table.

"You'd sin incessantly if you could be one," Flammonde teased, not unkindly; for Flammonde was never unkind.

"Certainly," and Miniver's teeth flashed. "Sin was a particular gift of the Medici." He glowered above his clasped, arched hands. "Now then, murder requires motive and opportunity."

"You become commonplace," Flammonde smiled.

"Commonplace be damned," cursed Miniver, and eyed Flammonde's khaki suit with loathing. "I become exact. Motive is either gain or passion. Morgan's son and Flammonde both inherit from Richard, but not enough to impel

them to murder. As to passion, several of you might have been jealous. You love Leonora, most of you."

"As to opportunity," Klingenhagen changed the subject, "your own opportunity, at dinner last evening, was as good as anyone's."

"Only I didn't kill Richard," said Miniver.

"The woman who wrote the note—" began Carville.

"She promised to kill him publicly and to his disgrace, remember. And Richard expected a visitor after me—a trusted friend, who could take him off guard and shoot him. Then close Richard's dead hand around the pistol stock, bend his dead finger around the trigger, and slip away in the night."

"Night?" echoed Flammonde.

"The sun sets late this time of year, and I dare say Richard's neighbors can swear to my departure. But the killer would come and go by darkness, to be unrecognizable." Miniver scowled above his hands. "Who can account for himself from sundown to sunrise?"

"I can't," whined Luke, shrinking into his clothes.

"Nor can I," said Klingenhagen, and nervously swigged beer.

"Morgan can swear to me here at 'The Chrysalis,'" offered Flammonde. "He was in the common room, fiddling while that piano player Pretzel drummed out song after song."

"I helped with the music,"

agreed Morgan. "Pretzel played cradle songs and carnivals, spring songs and funeral marches."

"All of them raucously, no doubt," growled Miniver. "But 'The Chrysalis' closes at three in the morning."

"I stayed all night with Morgan," said Flammonde. "I'd had a glass too much, I fear. You did me a great favor, Morgan."

"And himself a greater," amplified Miniver. "You gave him an alibi nobody can break. He was fiddling here before sundown, stayed until three, then took you home with him."

"That disposes of Flammonde and Morgan," said Carville.

"Only Morgan," corrected Miniver. "When did Flammonde get here?"

"Why," said Morgan, looking at Flammonde, "Why—"

Silence. We could hear the jabber out in the barroom. Then Flammonde laughed. "For what possible reason should I kill Richard?" he challenged. "He didn't take Leonora's love."

"No, and you couldn't bear to see her held cheaply," said Miniver. "You've always had interesting ways of making wrong right, Flammonde. That's one reason I thought of you as soon as I heard of the shooting. Another was that Richard expected a trusted friend—and all Tilbury trusts you."

Flammonde laughed again. "Are these fantasies necessary?"

"Vitaly," Miniver assured him. "A third reason is that it was your pistol that killed Richard."

Flammonde shook his curly gray head. "I've never owned a pistol."

"The constable found the merchant who sold it to you." Miniver's spiky finger pointed. "You went to Richard's with the pistol ready in your pocket—"

"That's a damnable lie!" Flammonde jumped up. "It was Richard's own pistol, lying there on his mantelpiece!"

Miniver leaned back and smirked. "The oldest trick in law. I wondered if you'd stampede the second time round or the third."

"What are you saying, Miniver?" demanded Luke. "The constable's told everybody that it was Richard's pistol."

"So it was," nodded Miniver, unabashed. "I myself made Richard take it out of his pocket and put it on the mantel. *But how did Flammonde know where it lay?*"

"The constable—" stuttered Flammonde.

"He only saw it in Richard's dead hand," Miniver cut him off. "You've convicted yourself, Flammonde. You did it for Leonora, didn't you?"

Flammonde stood with his knuckles on the table. His face had gone as gray as his hair. "Richard showed me that note," he said. "We both knew Leonora's handwriting."

"You were to protect him from her?" asked Luke blankly.

"He didn't like her threat of a disgraceful death. He said she was crazy from hurt pride, so he'd give me money—"

Flammonde's face stirred and crumpled and looked old. He picked up Miniver's knife in his hand.

"Money would make me dashing and successful-seeming," he flung out in a rush. "Then maybe I'd dazzle her into forgetting him, do him a favor and myself a favor too, because he knew I loved her—"

Again he stopped.

"Then you shot him," said Miniver. "I understand why."

"How can you understand?" Flammonde cried at him.

"Because I love Leonora, too."

That stunned us all. We never imagined Miniver loving anybody since, say, Catharine de' Medici.

"Richard was too busy kinging it to see that Leonora was a queen," said Miniver, as gently as Flammonde might have said it. "He had no sense of personal darkness that might need her light."

Flammonde turned away. "You can't leave here," warned Carville.

"No," said Flammonde sickly, "I can't leave here."

He clutched his hands quickly to his breast, then he melted down on his face and kicked out once. We all jumped up—all except Miniver.

Klingenhagen stooped and turned Flammonde over. Miniver's knife had slid between Flammonde's ribs into the heart. How red the blood was on the front of the khaki suit.

"Waiter," said Miniver, "call Dr. Cole—he's the coroner."

He poured more wine into his tumbler. "Two of Leonora's chief enthusiasms gone, within hours of each other," he murmured, half to himself. "Now she may so relax her lofty standards as to notice me."

"You?" squeaked Luke.

"I'll be executor of Richard's estate. The fee won't make me rich, but it will help me seem elegant. The day after tomorrow, I think, will be a good time to do myself the honor of calling upon Leonora."

We all moved away then—from Miniver at the table and from Flammonde limp and motionless on the floor.

"I call that cold-blooded," said Luke tightly.

Miniver coughed.

"I call it fate," he said, and kept on drinking.

***The other famous poem
behind the crime . . .***

MINIVER CHEEVEY

by EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,

Grew lean while he assailed the seasons:

He wept that he was ever born,

And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old

When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;

The vision of a warrior bold

Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

AUTHOR: **ELLERY QUEEN**

TITLE: ***Mystery at the Library of Congress***

TYPE: Detective Story

DETECTIVE: Ellery Queen

LOCALES: New York and Washington

TIME: The Present

COMMENTS: *One of Ellery's newest adventures—seeking the elusive clue that would help break an international dope ring . . .*

ELLERY RESPONDED TO INSPECTOR Terence Fineberg's invitation with pleasure. Fineberg, in charge of the Central Office, was one of Inspector Queen's ancient beat-buddies, and he used to slip Ellery candy bars. He detested amateur detectives, so the old mink must be desperate.

"Park it," Inspector Fineberg said, blowing hot and cold. "You know Inspector Pete Santoria of the Narcotic Squad?"

Ellery nodded to the stone-jawed Narcotics man.

"We'll skip the protocol, Ellery," Fineberg went on, gnashing his dentures. "Calling you in wasn't our idea. The big brass thought this case could use your screwb—your God-given talents."

"I'm ever at the beck of the law enforcement arm," Ellery said kindly, "especially when it's grasping at straws. You may fire when ready, Finey."

"The buck," Fineberg shouted to Inspector Santoria, "is yours."

Santoria said in tooth-sucking tones, "We got a line on a new dope ring, Queen. The junk is coming in, we think, from France, and in kilo lots. New York is the distribution depot. None of the lower echelons knows any of the others except the few in immediate contact. We want the big boy on the New York end. That this gang aren't regulars is about all we know for sure."

"Of course they're no regulars," the Central Office head grumbled.

"Who ever heard of a regular dope-running crumbum who could read?"

"Read?" Ellery came to a point like a bird-dog. "Read what, Finney?"

"Books, for gossakes!"

"Don't tell me we authors are now being blamed for the narcotics traffic, too," Ellery said airily. "How do books come into this?"

"Using 'em as a code!" Terence Fineberg implored the ceiling to witness. "An information-passing operation is going on down in Washington that's an intermediate step between shipment and delivery. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics got on the trail of the D.C. members of the ring—two of 'em, anyway—and they're both being watched."

"One of the two," Inspector Santoria took it up, "is a colorless little shnook named Balcom who works for a Washington travel agency. He used to be a high school English teacher. The other—a girl named Norma Shuffling—is employed at the Library of Congress."

"The Library's being used as the contact rendezvous?"

"Yes. Balcom's job is to pass along the information as to when, where, and how a new shipment is coming into New York. The contact to whom he has to pass the information is identified for Balcom by the Shuffling girl. They play it cool—a different contact is used every time."

Ellery shrugged. "All you have to do is spot one as the Shuffling girl points him out to Balcom—"

"Yes, sir, Mr. Queen," the Narcotics chief said, sounding like the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*. "Want a go at it?"

"Just what takes place?" Ellery asked intently.

Inspector Fineberg's glance quelled Santoria. "Balcom visits the Library only when the girl is on duty—she works out of the main desk filling call slips and bringing the books onto the floor. Balcom takes either Desk One Forty-seven or, if that's occupied, the nearest one that's vacant. When Shuffling spies him she brings him some books conforming to slips filled out by her in advance. It's the titles of the books that tip him off—she never communicates with him in any other way."

"Titles," Ellery said, nuzzling the word. "What does Balcom do?"

"He looks the books over, then takes an easy gander around his immediate neighborhood. And that's all. After that he just sits there reading, doesn't take his eyes off his books, till closing time, when he gets up and goes home."

"The Library bit is just so Balcom can identify the messenger," Inspector Santoria said. "The actual passage of the information is made at a different meet."

"But if Balcom's being watched —"

"He works for a travel agency,

I told you! Any idea how many people he comes in contact with daily?"

"We figure it works like this, Ellery," the Central Office head explained. "After a session at the Library—the next morning, say—the messenger that Shuffling identified for Balcom through the book titles shows up at the travel agency as a customer. Balcom recognizes him and passes him a legitimate ticket envelope, only it contains not just plane or railroad tickets, but the dope shipment info, too."

"And if you could spot one of these contacts—"

"We could track Balcom's message to its destination. That would be Big Stuff himself, who's sure as hell covered behind a smart front here in New York."

A contact and shipment, Ellery learned, occurred about once every ten days. The Federals had set up their first stakeout a month before, and at that time Miss Shuffling had brought three books to Balcom's desk.

"What were they?"

Inspector Santoria fished a report from a folder. "Steve Allen's *The Funny Men*, Count Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, and Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*."

"Lovely!" Ellery murmured. "Allen, Tolstoy, Freud . . . Well." He seemed disappointed. "It's simple enough. A kindergarten acrostic—"

"Sure." Terence Fineberg retort-

ed. "F for Freud, A for Allen, T for Tolstoy. F-A-T. There was a three-hundred pound character sitting near Balcom."

"The trouble was," Santoria said, "the Feds and we weren't on to the system that first time, and by the time we'd figured it out the fat guy had already got his info from Balcom and taken off."

"What about the second contact?"

"Three books again. Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, George R. Stewart's *Fire*, and Ben Hecht's *Actor's Blood*."

"C-S-H. No acrostic there. Changed the system . . ." Ellery frowned. "Must be in the titles—something in common . . . Was there an American Indian sitting near Balcom on that visit? Or someone with red hair?"

"Quick, isn't he, Pete?" Inspector Fineberg asked sourly. "Yeah, we saw that—cherries, fire, blood are all red. It was an old dame with dyed red hair sitting a couple seats from Balcom. Only again we doped it out too late to cover the actual contact. The third time we missed clean."

"Ah, couldn't find the common denominator."

"What common denominator?" Santoria asked angrily. "You got to have at least two items for that!" "There was only *one* book the third time?"

"Right! I still say the doll got suspicious and never brought the

other books. But do you think the brass would listen to me? No, they got to call in a screwb—an expert!”

“The thing is, Ellery,” Inspector Fineberg said, “we do have evidence that a third shipment was picked up, which means a contact *was* made after that one-book deal.”

“They did it some other way, Terence!” Santoria snapped.

“Sure, Pete, sure,” Fineberg said soothingly. “I go along with you. Only the brass don’t. They want Brains working on this. Who are we to reason why?”

“What was the book?” Ellery asked.

“Rudyard Kipling’s *The Light That Failed*.”

Santoria growled. “We waited around the whole damn afternoon while people came and went—what a turnover they get down there!—and our boy Balcom sits there at Desk One Forty-seven reading the Kipling book from cover to cover like he was enjoying it!”

“*The Light That Failed* was about a man who went blind. Was there someone in the vicinity wearing dark glasses, or immersed in a volume of Braille?”

“No blind people, no cheaters, no Braille, no nothing.”

Ellery mused. “Do you have a written report of that visit to the Library?”

Santoria dug out another folder. Ellery glanced through it. It was a

detailed account of the third Balcom-Shuffling contact, complete with descriptions of suspects, unclassified incidents, and so on. Ellery emerged from this rubble bearing a nugget.

“Of course,” he said gently. “The one book by Kipling was all Balcom needed that day. A saintly-looking old gent wearing a clerical collar was consulting a card catalogue within view of Balcom and absently filled his pipe. He was flipping the wheel of his pocket lighter—flipped it unsuccessfully several times, it says here, boys—when a guard walked over and stopped him. The old fellow apologized for his absent-mindedness, put the lighter and pipe away, and went on consulting the index cards. *The Light That Failed*.”

“Lemme see that!” Fineberg snatched the folder, red in the face. “Pete,” he howled, “how the devil did we miss that?”

“We thought sure there’d be more books, Terence,” Inspector Santoria stammered. “And the old guy was a preacher—”

“The old guy was a phony! Look, Ellery, maybe you can help us at that. We’ve been slow on the uptake—books yet! If on the next meet you could be sitting near Balcom and spot the contact man right away—How about it?”

“You couldn’t keep me out of this with a court order, Finney,” Ellery assured him. “What’s more, it won’t cost the City of New York

a plugged subway token—I'll pay my own expenses to Washington. Can you arrange it with the Feds?"

Inspector Fineberg arranged it with the Feds, and on Monday of the following week Ellery was snuggled down one desk behind and to the right of Desk 147 in the main reading room of the venerable gray Renaissance building east of the Capitol in downtown Washington. One of his fellow stakeout men, a balding Federal Narcotics agent named Hauck who looked like a senior accountant in a wholesale drygoods firm, was parked in the outermost concentric circle of desks, near the entrance; they could signal each other by a half turn of the head. Another Federal agent and Inspector Santoria lounged around outside making like camera bugs.

Ellery's desk was loaded with reference books, for he was being an Author in Search of Material, a role he had often played at the Library of Congress in earnest.

He had filed his slips at the main desk with Norma Shuffling, whose photo—along with Balcom's—he had studied at the Federal Bureau. When she brought the books to his desk he was able to get a close look. Tense and sad-looking, she was a pretty, dark-eyed girl who had been at some pains to camouflage her prettiness. Ellery wondered how she had come to be mixed up in an international dope

operation; she could not have been more than twenty years old.

The little travel agent, Balcom, did not appear that day. Ellery had not expected him to, for the Federal men had said that Balcom visited the Library only on his days off, which were unpredictable. Today he was reported swamped at the office by a tidal wave of travel orders.

"But it's got to be soon, Queen," Inspector Santoria said Monday night in Ellery's room at the Hotel Mayflower. "Tomorrow's the eleventh day since the last meet, and they've never gone this long before."

"Balcom may not be able to get away from his office."

"He'll manage it," Agent Hauck said grimly.

Early the next morning Ellery's phone rang. It was Santoria. "I just got the word from Hauck. It's today."

"How's Balcom managing it?"

"He's reported out sick. Better get on over to the Library."

Norma Shuffling was bringing Ellery an armful of books when a little man with mousy eyes and mousy hair, dressed in a mousy business suit, pat-patted past Ellery's desk and slipped into the seat of Desk 147. Ellery did need Hauck's pencil-to-nose signal to identify the newcomer. It was Balcom.

The Shuffling girl passed Desk

147 without a glance. She placed Ellery's books softly before him and returned to her station. Ellery began to turn pages.

It was fascinating to watch them. Balcom and the girl might have inhabited different planets. Balcom stared at the encircling walls, the very picture of a man waiting. Not once did he look toward the main desk. There, her back to him, the pretty girl was quietly busy.

The reading room began to fill.

Ellery continued to study the two of them from above his book. Balcom had his dainty hands clasped on his desk now; he seemed to be dozing. Norma Shuffling was fetching books, working on the floor dozens of feet away.

A quarter of an hour passed.

Ellery sneaked an inventory of the readers in the vicinity. To Balcom's left sat a buxom woman in a smart strawberry silk suit; she wore bifocals and was raptly reading a volume of industrial reports.

To Balcom's right a very large man with wrestler's shoulders and no hair was absorbed in a volume on African lovebirds.

Beyond the bird-lover a snappily dressed Latin with Fidel Castro-like whiskers was making secretive notes from some ancient National Geographics.

Near the Cuban-looking man sat a thin elongated lady with a lavender-rinse hairdo who reminded Ellery of Miss Hildegard With-

ers; she was intent on the Congressional Record.

Also in the neighborhood were a scowling young beatnik who was leafing through a book on demonology; a Man of Distinction with a gray crewcut and an egg-spattered necktie who was frankly dozing; and a young lady with hearing-aid eyeglasses and some blue ink on one nostril who was copying something from a book on naval ordnance as if her life depended on it.

Suddenly the Shuffling girl started up the aisle. She was carrying a thick, oversized book.

Ellery turned a page. Was this it?

It was!

Miss Shuffling paused at Desk 147, placed the book deftly before Balcom, and walked away.

Balcom unclasped his little hands and opened the book to the title page.

The Complete Shakespeare.

The Complete Shakespeare?

Balcom began to idle through the volume. He made no attempt to survey his fellow-readers.

Shakespeare . . . Some quotation? Not likely, with thousands to cull.

Ellery concentrated.

Plays. A playwright? An actor? Nothing about anyone in the vicinity suggested the theater. Moreover, Balcom seemed obviously to be waiting.

Ten minutes later Miss Shuffling

silently laid another book on Desk 147 and as silently took herself off.

This time Balcom reached for the book with something like eagerness. Ellery craned.

Shaw . . . Shaw's *Man and Superman*.

A playwright again! But how could you make an instant identification of a playwright—or an actor, for that matter? Ellery glanced about under the pretext of stretching. No one within eyeshot was even reading a play.

Shakespeare—Shaw. Initials? S, S. SS! An ex-Nazi Storm Trooper? The big bald wrestlerish character who was interested in African lovebirds? Possibly, but how could anyone be sure? It had to be something Balcom could interpret with certainty at a glance. Besides, the fellow didn't look Teutonic, but Slavic.

Shakespeare, Shaw . . . English literature. An Englishman? No one Ellery could see looked English, although any of them might be. Besides, Shaw was really Irish.

Man and Superman? Somehow that didn't fit in with Shakespeare.

Ellery shook his head. What the deuce was the girl trying to convey to Balcom?

Balcom was now reading Shaw with concentration. But then he had to keep doing something. Was he waiting for another volume? Or would he soon look around and spot the contact?

If he does, Ellery thought with

exasperation, he's a better man than I am!

But Balcom did not look up from the Shaw book. He was showing no curiosity about his neighbors, so Ellery decided that he was expecting another book . . .

Yes, a third book was coming!

The Shuffling girl placed it on Desk 147. Ellery could barely contain himself.

He read the title almost simultaneously with Balcom, blessing his sharp eyesight.

Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant.

Blam went his theories! Shakespeare and Shaw, playwrights; Grant, a military man. S, S, now G. One Englishman, one Irishman, one American.

What did it all add up to?

Ellery couldn't think of a thing. He could feel Agent Hauck's eyes boring critical holes in his back.

And the minutes went bucketing by.

He now studied Balcom with ferocity. Did the three books mean anything to *him*? Not yet. Balcom was in trouble, too, as he pretended to glance through the Grant autobiography. Puzzlement showed in every slight movement.

Shakespeare . . . Shaw . . . General Grant . . .

Balcom had it!

He was now looking around casually, his gaze never lingering, as if one glimpse was all he needed.

Ellery struggled with panic. Any moment Balcom's contact might

get up and leave, knowing Balcom had spotted him. People were constantly coming and going; it would be impossible to identify the right one without the clue conveyed by the books. Ellery could already hear Inspector Santoria's horse laugh . . .

And then—O blessed!—he had it, too!

Ellery rose. He plucked his hat from the desk, strolled up the aisle past Agent Hauck, who had chewed his pencil eraser to crumbs, and went out into the Washington sunshine. Inspector Santoria and the other Federal man were seated in an unmarked car now, and Ellery slipped into the rear seat.

"Well?" the Federal man demanded. The Feds had been polite, but skeptical, over the New York brass's inspiration.

"Wait for Hauck."

Agent Hauck came out two minutes later. He paused near the car to light a cigarette, and Ellery said, "Get set for the tail. The contact is sitting two seats over to Balcom's right in the same row. He's the sporty little Cuban type."

"Afternoon, Finery," Ellery said on Friday of that week. "Don't tell me. You're stumped again."

"No, no, haha, sit down, my boy," Inspector Terence Fineberg said cordially. "You're ace-high around here! Thought you'd like to know Pete Santoria collared Big Stuff two hours ago in the act of taking possession of a shipment of H. The Feds are out right now picking up Balcom and the girl. By the way, that little Havana sport who led us to him was never closer to Cuba than an El Stinko cigar. He's a poolroom punk name of Harry Hummelmayer from the Red Hook section of Brooklyn."

Ellery nodded unenthusiastically. The spirit of the chase had long since left him. "Well, Finery, congratulations and all that. Was there something else? I have a date with four walls and an empty typewriter."

"Wait, Ellery, for gossakes! I've been going Nutsville trying to figure out a connection between Shakespeare, Shaw, and old man Grant. Even knowing the contact was Hummelmayer, I can't see what the three have in common."

"With Hummelmayer made up like Fidel Castro?" Ellery reached over the desk and, gripping Inspector Fineberg's knotty chin firmly, waggled it. "Beards, Finery, beards."



THE CAPE TRIANGULAR

by CORNELL WOOLRICH

(continued from page 29)

A man with the mournful eyes of a dog that has lost its master opened the door for them at Harding's house. A tall stately woman garbed in black was coming down the stairs as they entered.

"Mrs. Adams, this is Mr. Hobart," said the detective. "He's a stamp enthusiast like Mr. Harding was. He's been good enough to put his expert knowledge at our disposal."

She gave Hobart a warm look, as though the fact that he and her father had something in common was enough to make her look favorably on him. "I used to see him with the stamps so often," she said sadly. "Cruel, isn't it, Mr. Hobart?" She raised a handkerchief quickly to her lips, then regained control.

Foster went into the murder room, unlocked the secretary, and brought out the albums for Hobart. Then Foster rejoined Mrs. Adams in the hall.

Hobart seated himself at the table, shot back his cuffs, and resumed his checking. He took up where he had left off the night before, and in a very few minutes had reached and passed the triangular. Without moving a facial muscle he raised his eyes to the open doorway, then dropped them again.

A moment later, without any warning, the servant was standing in the doorway, coughing apologetically. Hobart looked up a second time without showing any emotion, although something like a short circuit had just gone through his system.

"Beg pardon, Mrs. Adams would like to know if I can get you any refreshment while you are working?"

"Thank you. A glass of water," said Hobart pleasantly.

The servant brought it in on an expensive chased-silver platter, set it down on the table, withdrew tactfully. Hobart heard his almost inaudible tread go up the stairs to the floor above. Mrs. Adams and the detective had also gone there some time before.

Now was as good a time as any.

Hobart fished out his watermark detector and placed it on his lap under the table. He stuck two fingers into the drinking glass and traced their moistened tips along the bottom of the detector. Then he took up Harding's tweezers, fixed them on the stamp, and gently peeled it off its hinge and free of the album. He dropped the stamp face down on the glistening tray.

Wrist shaking a little, he raised

the tray up above table level, where the light could get at it freely. The black of the tray slowly peered through the soggy stamp in a series of tracings that finally resolved themselves into the British royal crown with the initials *VR*.

It was genuine, the real thing! It was the third Cape triangular, either from the dispersed Ferrari collection or the lost Romanoff one!

His head swayed back until it almost struck the tall chair-back behind him; he tightened his neck muscles, pulled his head sharply forward again.

Its monetary value was no temptation to him. He didn't think of it in that way at all. It was his collector's instinct that cried out for its possession, to *keep*, to hide away, even though no other living eye but his own ever saw it again.

He thought: "Harding's dead now. I'm not robbing anyone at all. *She* doesn't understand stamps or care two pins about them. Nor does she need the money they might bring. Who'll ever know the difference? Who'll ever be the wiser? It's not as though I intended to dispose of it afterward, run the risk of exposure. It'll stay with me forever, and no one ever sees my collection but myself."

But he kept fighting it out, as he had at his home. And the tide started to turn. *He* was no thief. He'd never done anything like this before in his life. He wouldn't have

dreamed of doing a thing like this in business—appropriating a client's account. If he did this now he was no better—no, he was far worse—than that long-ago sharper who had swindled *him*. He could survive without this particular stamp. He had plenty of other rarities in his collection.

In the end he might have won out, overcome the temptation; but circumstances defeated him. The front doorbell rang sharply, and the servant's tread started down the stairs to answer it. Again he dabbed a finger into the glass of water, and stroked it across the hinge that had remained in the album, renewing its adhesive properties.

There was no excuse. The outer door had already opened, but there was equal time left to have replaced either one—the counterfeit or the genuine. He put back the forgery he had brought from his own house, and pressed it down until it remained fixed on the hinge. Then he put his other hand down on the tabletop, covering the real one, just as Broderick came into the room.

"Hello, Hobart," the detective greeted him. "How you coming along? Where's Foster, upstairs? We just picked up a suspicious character that was seen roaming around this vicinity two days ago." He went out again, to the foot of the stairs, and called his fellow worker down.

Hobart had only to lift his hand from the table. The stamp, still

damp, adhered to his palm. He thrust his hand into his side pocket, and when he brought his hand out again it was empty.

Foster's voice was raised, outside in the hall, in argument with his teammate. "You're crazy! Harding would never have let anyone of that description into the house, and if he had gotten in he would have swiped everything he could lay his hands on . . . All right, I'll go down and question him, but you're 'way off on the wrong track, I tell you!"

Hobart went ahead with his work, eyelids veiled.

By eleven thirty he had reached Zanzibar, the last country in any collector's album, and as he straightened in his chair with a sigh, Foster and the other detective came back. They were still arguing, but apparently Foster had been vindicated by the results of their questioning. "See, I told you he'd be a false alarm!" he was saying. "Why, he's just a stumblebum. The flophouse keeper himself told me he was in a two-bit bed that whole evening from nine o'clock on! How you making out, Mr. Hobart?"

"Just got through," Hobart told him, cushioning his hands comfortably behind his head, "and I can give this collection a clean bill of health. There's nothing missing, according to the check system he used in his catalogue. Not the cheapest two-cent U.S. variety."

"There's still a chance that it was a stamp fiend," offered Broderick,

"but he was frightened away by something and didn't finish casing the collection for what he wanted."

Hobart was about to say, "How long does it take to lift a stamp out of one of these books, if you know what you want?" but changed his mind prudently. "I'm going home," he said instead. "It's been a strenuous evening's work."

He made the trip back, in the detective's car, with no more sense of guilt or strain than if he hadn't had a \$150,000 stamp in his pocket. At his own door he waved aside the detective's renewed thanks with an airy, "It was an interesting experience! Wouldn't have missed it for the world."

In his den he turned on the light and locked the door. He opened the safe, took out his own album, and opened it to the Cape of Good Hope page. Then he took the priceless triangular out of his pocket, touched it to his lips, held it up for a moment toward the light with a smug expression. Finally he affixed a hinge to it and placed it where he had taken the counterfeit from.

Just as he was about to return the album to the safe, a faint sound from outside came to his ear. He crossed swiftly to the door and flung it open. The servant was standing out there, one foot behind him, trying to appear as though he had just come up the hall to knock. Hobart received a distinct impression, however, that he had been

crouched down on his heels for some time past, watching him through the keyhole.

He could feel his face whiten. "I thought you'd gone to bed!" he yelled. "What're you doing out here at this hour, spying on me?"

"No, sir," said the man submissively. "I only wanted to ask you if I should lock up yet."

"You ought to know that without having to ask!" He slammed the door, nearly striking the man in the face with it. He went back and finished putting away the album. He was shaking a little—and not altogether from exasperation.

He swore through clenched teeth. "He had to catch me just at that particular moment! That's the only slip-up I've made throughout the whole business!" But then, he consoled himself, the spying servant had no way of knowing what it was, at that distance, nor where it had come from, nor how it had been obtained.

He didn't give the man as much credit as he deserved. For at that very moment, locking up and putting out lights in another part of the house, his hostile employee was grimacing knowingly: "Swiped it, eh? I can tell that by the look he had on his face. It's always the ones that mistrusts others that turns out to be crooked themselves. I'm biding my time. I've got something now, but I'm biding my time with it. He thinks he's a tough guy, does he? Well, when I get the chance

I'm going to show him I can be tougher."

One week went by from the night Hobart had completed his specialized "assistance" to the police investigation of Aaron Harding's murder. During that time the inquiry seemed to get no further. An item in one of the papers told him that Mrs. Adams had returned to Chicago. She intended to return later to dispose of the house after the case had been finally closed.

There was no other mention of the matter. It had been a "quiet" sort of murder, in one sense—had not excited much public interest, so the editors made no attempt to keep it alive.

Exactly one week to the day after his last visit to the Harding house, his office secretary announced, "There's a Mr. Lindquist out here to see you."

He couldn't recall the name offhand as belonging to any of his clients, but there was no sense in turning away a new account.

A short little man with an extremely ruddy, cherubic face and a pointed white goatee came bustling in. He vaguely suggested a French cabinet minister, with his cutaway coat and glasses on a heavy black cord.

"I couldn't resist combining pleasure with business!" was his greeting. Then, at the uncertain look on Hobart's face: "I see you can't place me. Well, that's not to be won-

dered at. You've been dealing with us for years but I seldom attend to our correspondence personally. I'm Helmer Lindquist, president of the Lindquist Stamp Company of New York."

Hobart smiled with his eyes, but the lower part of his face tightened a little—why, he could not have told. They shook hands.

"So you're the man that's been getting all my hard-earned money!" he said jocularly. "Sit down." Hobart offered a cigarette. "What brings you to this neck of the woods?"

"I came out to do a little buying," beamed the pigeon-like little man.

Hobart's jawline wouldn't relax, much as he tried to ease it. "You came out *here* from New York to do some buying? It's usually the other way around, isn't it?"

"But this is a special opportunity not likely to occur again—what the French call a *bon marché*." He glanced at Hobart coyly, as though debating whether or not to tell him any more. "I know I shouldn't tip my hand like this. I'm not forgetting you're a collector yourself. However, I represent a corporation, and you're probably not in a position to pay one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for a single stamp, so there's no harm in—"

The tautness of Hobart's facial muscles had become like lockjaw. He just looked the question, without being able to ask it.

"Yes, you've guessed it," chirped

the gnome-like visitor. "The famous Cape triangular, in the Harding collection. I have a client in New York at this very moment, ready to pay me two hundred thousand for it, cold cash. If I can get it back for what Harding paid for it, fifty thousand dollars profit is not to be sneezed at."

Hobart's tongue flicked across his lips. "How do you know it's genuine?" he murmured almost inaudibly. His mouth was dry.

"How do I know? Why, we sold it to him! Our firm has never handled a single stamp that wasn't genuine in the ninety years of our existence. Our agent bought it from Ferrari in Paris in 1922." Lindquist was laughing puckishly. "Naturally, I don't blame *you* for being on your guard, after the way you were taken in yourself by that very stamp once. The burned child shuns the fire."

"So you know that too?" Hobart didn't get pale this time, or betray himself in any way. The first shock had insulated him against the second. He said to himself stonily: "This man must die. He sold Harding the genuine triangular. He remembers reading in the papers at the time that I was swindled with a forgery."

Aloud he asked with careful steadiness, "Have you seen the Harding collection yet?" But obviously Lindquist hadn't, or he would already have raised the alarm about the substitution.

"No, but I have an appointment with Inspector Foster to look it over tomorrow. I can't, of course, buy anything until the estate has been probated, but I'm hoping to be able to get an option, first claim on this triangular, from Mrs. Adams."

Hobart said, "Why don't you come out and dine with me at my house tonight? I'll show you my collection."

"Splendid, splendid!" the enthusiastic little man burst out. "I'm at the Garrison Hotel. Very kind of you indeed! And now I won't take up any more of your time."

"I'll call for you at six sharp and drive you out." As the frosted-glass panel closed after his caller, Hobart slumped back behind the desk and held his head in both hands. "He's got to be put out of the way," he said to himself.

It wasn't revelation of the theft that worried him now. He was realizing he had put himself into a position where he would almost certainly be charged with the murder itself. After all, how could he prove that he had taken it the night he had, and not two nights before, the night Harding had been killed? He had stayed in his den that whole night going over his stamps. Nobody had seen him, no one could vouch for him, except his servant—and a single unsupported corroboration like that was too shaky to count on . . .

Tracing imaginary lines on his glass-topped desk with a gold pen-

cil, he said to himself: "There are two ways out to my place from the Garrison Hotel, downtown. One is the short way, with traffic lights to guarantee its safety. One is the long roundabout route, that crosses the railroad right-of-way twice. He's a stranger here. He won't know the difference. The Flyer shoots through those right-of-ways at about 6:10 every night, for the East. If something should happen to the car, and it stalled on the crossing, I'd have time to jump for it—if I knew ahead of time—but would he?"

He bounced the gold pencil on the glass. "That's it!" he exulted. He was a businessman, quick to make decisions. Only this time the business was death.

At five to six, in a dark backstreet behind the Garrison Hotel, he stopped his car, got out, took a wrench from the tool kit, and carried it around to the front door on the right hand side. He glanced around him, but in the twilight, in this section of factories and warehouses, there was no one in sight.

He began swinging the wrench like a short-tempered man who has been trying to repair something and finally loses control of himself. The blows bent the outside doorhandle down at such an angle that it became impossible to turn it, even from the inside. Then he flattened the handle on the inside, so that even thin fingers wouldn't work under it to get a grip on it. The

door beside the guest seat was now jammed immovably for all practical purposes.

Five minutes later he was leading Mr. Lindquist toward the car under the lighted hotel-marquee, all sociability. Murray Hobart could be agreeable when he wanted to.

"You'll have to get in from that side and squeeze through under the wheel," he apologized. "A truck grazed me coming down and jammed that door fast."

He noted with satisfaction the difficulty that the rotund little man had in clearing the steering wheel with his convex shape and short legs. When he had, he was jammed into a pocket from which there was no possible escape.

"Do you drive, Mr. Lindquist?" Hobart asked, as they started off.

"No, strangely enough I've never taken it up."

Hobart glanced at his watch. A minute past six. It had better happen at the first crossing, otherwise the Flyer might go by before they reached the second. 6:10 for the first, and about a quarter past for the second.

He held his car to a steady forty going down the shabby warehouse-lined road that had neither traffic officers nor lights and that drew away from the direction of his own house at nearly a right angle, only to loop around again later. Forty was just about right—would get them there neither too soon nor too late. And since Lindquist didn't

drive, he wouldn't be able to recognize the pretended engine trouble, when it came.

He started to talk about stamps again, to keep Lindquist's mind occupied. He was that kind of a man. He could talk shop to the man beside him while he was in the very act of driving him to his death.

He said, eyes on a tiny green pea ahead that marked the railroad crossing, "My own collection is no slouch, if I must say so myself. I've been collecting about eighteen years now."

"Nothing like it, is there?" agreed Lindquist heartily.

Hobart glanced at his watch. 6:08. They'd just get there in time for the funeral. One hand left the wheel, came idly to rest on the door latch next to him, in readiness for his own imminent bolt.

Lindquist had gone on chattering blithely about the Harding collection. "I bet if it were appraised it would come to a cool half million. Why, his early British alone—"

He bit the sentence off short. Left it hanging in mid-air as though it had been cut by a knife. Hobart stiffened and the bristles on the back of his neck stood up.

He'd seen the collection, this man next to him!

Not the fact that he had admitted knowledge of the early British stamps (as a stamp dealer he could have supplied them to Harding and therefore known they were in the collection), but the way he had

guiltily stopped short in mid-sentence, choked on what he was saying, gave him away.

He had already seen the collection, and yet he had said in the office this afternoon that he hadn't. That could only mean one thing. He was no stamp dealer. He was a decoy, a police spy! He had been employed by Foster to get the goods on Hobart. That meant he was already under suspicion; they had their eyes on him.

That changed everything. He mustn't die. He mustn't die! Why he, Hobart, was under surveillance right now—he must have been every step of the way. The whole thing was a set-up. If he went through with his plan now, they'd have him dead to rights for murder! He'd *take* the grand larceny rap, he'd even risk being accused of the Harding murder—anything, *anything*. But he mustn't go through with this. It would be delivering himself up to them tied hand and foot.

The red light glowed ahead of them. He braked violently, nearly standing erect in his seat to bring down the last ounce of pressure. They bucked, teetered, lurched, half skidded, half ploughed, to a sickening stop, inches away from the outside line of rails of the quadruple trackbed.

The lathe-like barriers that had attempted to descend to guard the right-of-way were unable to meet, formed a pointed arch over the car.

One of the rear tires blew out with a plaintive whine, overstrained by the skidding.

"My, you did that on short notice!" remonstrated Lindquist.

There was a roaring like a high wind; a blinding beam of light shot along the track, reared abruptly into the air, snuffed out, and the long sleek Flyer went racketing by, car after streamlined car of it. The reflection of the long rows of lighted windows streamed across their faces like a rippling golden pennant. Hobart's was glistening with sweat. Lord, that had been a close shave!

He pushed the door on his side open, got out on trembling legs. "Got to have a look at that back tire," he panted to Lindquist—probably unheard in the din of the passing train.

He squatted down like a frog by the left rear wheel. Sure, flat as a—He got vertigo or something, couldn't focus his eyes straight. The wheel began to draw away from him, slowly, then faster.

He straightened with a shriek. He saw at once what had happened. Lindquist was wedged under the steering wheel in the attempt to get out after him, facing backward, waving his arms helplessly around over his head like pinwheels. He'd done something—accidentally stepped on the accelerator or taken off the brake. There was a short pronounced grade down to the depressed trackbed, enough to pull the car into motion.

He yelled, "The brake! Put on the brake!"

But evidently Lindquist couldn't. He was wedged there. But it was all right, it would be all right. The long Flyer, not yet completely past, was running the second track over, and here came the observation car.

They seemed to miss each other by inches, while Hobart stood there paralyzed, incapable of moving. *Fff!* and the observation car had streaked by and the right-of-way was clear.

The car rolled on across the just-vacated second pair of tracks, came to a halt on the third, the center of the depression.

Lindquist was still semaphoring. He had one leg out over the side but he couldn't seem to extricate his other hip. Hobart could see him too plainly. There was something the matter! He was all blue up and down one side, as if a flashlight picture were being taken of him. There was an inhuman screech overhead, like a bird of prey—and a freight train came tearing out from behind the Flyer, racing in the other direction, with the unexpectedness of a snake. There was a crack like a sheet of tin being torn off a roof, and a lot of little things came falling down all over.

"Get me a drink, quick—and pack my bag!" blurted Hobart as his servant opened the door for him a few minutes later. No time had been lost. He had to burn that damn

stamp first of all. He was in for it now. But it was an accident. They couldn't make it anything else! True, at first he'd intended—but he'd changed his mind.

The servant poured him a jiggerful of brandy and he gulped it down. "Accident," he gasped. "Car smashed up—man I was bringing home to dinner—"

"Better take another." But the servant's eyes were hard. It wasn't said solicitously.

Hobart wanted another drink but he had to go in there and get rid of that stamp before he did anything else. He threw the door of his den open—and the lights were already on. Foster was sitting there waiting for him.

He said, "*You* know why I'm here." And he got up and came over to Hobart. He took Hobart by the cuff and twisted that around into a knot that acted like a manacle.

Hobart didn't pretend. The game was long past that stage now.

"You think I killed Harding. I didn't. All right, I'll make a clean breast of it. I did substitute a fake for the triangular. But that was two nights *after*, when I went up there to help you. I didn't kill him."

He turned beseechingly to the servant standing behind him. "Tell him, Graves—tell him! You were spying on me through the keyhole. Tell him what night it was you saw me come home and put a stamp into my book late at night."

"I have already, sir," said the

servant. "He asked me that the first thing, and I told him. It was nine nights ago. Tonight's Thursday. It was Tuesday of last week."

"The night Aaron Harding met his death," murmured Foster.

"No!" Hobart's voice rose to a wail of anguish. "He's lying! He's got a better memory than that! He hates me! He knows it was a week ago tonight—last *Thursday* night."

"I have a good memory," said the servant imperturbably. "You've often told me so yourself. That's why I know I'm not mistaken. It was Tuesday of last week."

Hobart appealed frantically to the detective. "Don't you remember the first night you phoned me to come out? I went to the wrong address first. Doesn't that *prove* I'd never been to Harding's house before?"

"Not necessarily," said the detective. "It could just as easily prove you were clever enough to want to

make it *look* that way. Lindquist, who was never in this town before, got out there without any trouble. Where is he, by the way? We investigated him and he's exactly what he says he is."

"I had an accident with my car." Hobart shuddered. "He was—it was hit by a freight train at the Central Avenue crossing just now."

All Foster said, with deadly emphasis was, "*Since when is Central Avenue the shortest way between the Garrison Hotel and your house here? Let's get started, shall we?*"

As he half carried the almost senseless victim of circumstances through the door, he growled disgustedly, "All for a scrap of colored paper!"

"But I didn't kill Harding!" shrieked Hobart.

"You're the only one who had a motive," Foster said flatly. "You're the only one who could have. If you didn't kill him, *who did?*"

EDITORS' NOTE: If you happen to be a stamp collector, you will be puzzled by the description of the great philatelic rarity which Cornell Woolrich calls "the Cape Triangular." Actually, there are more than a dozen different varieties of Cape triangles, but the stamp Mr. Woolrich describes is one he has "invented" for purely fictional purposes.

For the record (and to save you the trouble of writing), the true Cape triangles were issued between 1853 and 1864. The watermark was the outline-drawing of an anchor. At the time this editorial postscript was written, the highest catalogue value (Scott's) for a Cape of Good Hope triangle was \$7000—for the 1861, four pence

red (an error in color), unused—a far cry from the \$150,000 value that Mr. Woolrich ascribed to his Cape Triangular.

But Mr. Woolrich, you will recall, said “his” stamp was issued in “the Forties of the Nineteenth Century”—so, obviously, he imagined a Cape of Good Hope triangle that *preceded* the ones officially issued. Also, Mr. Woolrich told us that of his stamp “only three are known to be in existence,” and these three are identifiable not by the anchor watermark of the true stamps issued later, but by a watermark showing “the British royal crown and the initials VR, Victoria Regina.”

Well, if there were such a Cape of Good Hope stamp, and if only three were extant, a copy *might* be worth \$150,000 in these inflated times when millions of dollars are paid for a Rembrandt, and even more millions to a box-office movie star for acting in a single motion picture. There is no telling, of course, how much the British Guiana stamp, number 13 (of which only one copy has survived), would fetch at auction today: the figure *might* be astronomical.



NEXT MONTH . . .

EQMM's 22nd Anniversary Issue
32 extra pages!

a Perry Mason short novel
by ERLE STANLEY GARDNER

a brilliant critique, never before published
by JOHN DICKSON CARR

the first of a new Secret Service series
by MICHAEL GILBERT

a Miss Marple adventure
by AGATHA CHRISTIE

FISH STORY

by *LESLIE GORDON BARNARD*

IT WAS HOT IN THE CITY AND I wished myself back at the sea. When I got to the club it was a bit cooler, but not much. The stewards had drawn the venetian blinds to shut out the glare, and there was the usual tinkle of ice and voices. The same crowd as usual: Joe Macaulay and Harry Trimble, Elson Smith and Buddy Wilson.

And, of course, Eddie. I knew Eddie would tell me just how and why I missed getting a tuna.

"Look who's here!" Eddie greeted me. "Any luck?"

"No," I said.

Eddie grinned and nodded. Eddie would now tell me where I went wrong, and I didn't want to argue—it was too hot—so I said, "No fish, Eddie, but a good story."

"Let's have it," Eddie said.

"It's not your kind," I warned him. "There isn't a woman in it."

Eddie grinned. He began shouting for the steward to bring him another drink, and went grumbling out to see about it.

Harry said, "Don't wait for him. He'll probably shake up the whole management." Eddie was like that.

"The point is," I said, "did this old fellow Mac do right—or didn't he? That's how he put it up to me.

"Mac's the chap who took me out tuna fishing," I told them. "We had

a pretty fair squall and it reminded him of a sporting type he took out once. Up to that time Mac had never taken a tuna. Mackerel, cod, herring—that was his line, but this fellow persuaded him because all the regular tuna boats were chartered. Money didn't matter, he said, so Mac rigged things up, got a lad to help with the boat, and they went out. You get quick changes off Little Harbor and this one came out of the sou'west.

"Old Mac took a look and didn't like it, but his sportsman wouldn't hear of it. He'd just got his first tuna on, and to hell with the weather. It was Mac's first tuna, too, so they played the fish while the sky got blacker and there was a growl of wind—not much yet. Even when they got the big fish alongside, and finally on board, it held off; but by then the sky was dark as the wrath of God. The land was just a distant smudge and then not even that. But they had the fish.

"It was a good fish, not the biggest they'd taken off the harbor, but plenty big. Four hundred and twenty-seven pounds. The fellow was pretty chesty about it, until the storm struck. Mac said he'd seen men scared and, times, he had been pretty scared himself—but this was different. The fellow grabbed him,

shouting, 'We'll never make it.'

"And Mac said, 'We're in God's hands, mister.'

"But he hung onto Mac saying he didn't want to die, and that there were things a man did in his life . . . so Mac said if he had anything to get off his chest it was all right with him. The boy was busy bailing and it would be just between the two of them—and God, if you wanted to count Him in.

"So he told old Mac. It wasn't a pretty story. There was a woman mixed up in it and defalcations—the fellow was a bank clerk when it happened—but he'd got away with it and nobody the wiser.

"Mac said, when you counted in all the details the fellow babbled to him, he felt as if he had a Jonah aboard and that if he could put him overboard the lad and he might make land. But make it they did at last.

"Mac said you never saw a man change so quick in your life as that fellow did, once he knew he wasn't going to drown fathoms deep. He was the big city fellow then, with money to buy things, and no worry but to make sure an old fisherman kept his mouth closed.

"'Offering me money, he was,' Mac snorted. 'I said I'd given my promise and that was good enough. To keep his damned money. And to this day, sir,' Mac said, 'I've never said a word about it to a soul, but it's all of ten years old now,

and mentioning no names and no harm done to him, but this squall reminded me, sir, and I get to wondering if I done right to keep such a promise, and him sitting pretty and feeling he's got away with it all these years. And mind you,' Mac said, 'he's got the impertinence to come here now and again and goes out after tuna, but never with me, and I've heard him talking big up at the hotel in the harbor.'

I finished old Mac's story, and I said, "Well, did he do right to keep a thing like that to himself, or not?"

Elson Smith said, "What else could he do? A promise is a promise—even to a guy like that."

Joe Macaulay got up. He slanted one of the venetian blinds to shut out the glare from the street.

Harry Trimble coughed . . .

Eddie came in with a steward in tow—and drinks. "I missed your story," he said, "but I got some service. A hell of a place this is getting to be. Just set them down there, steward." He looked at me. "So you didn't get a tuna, eh? Who was it you went out with?"

"Fellow they call Old Mac," I said.

Eddie nodded. "Now there's your trouble right there," he said. "That old fossil ought to stick to his mackerel and cod. He's not a tuna man. I ought to know. First tuna he ever had in his boat I caught. Nice fish it was, too, Scaled just four hundred and twenty-seven pounds."

AUTHOR: **JOE GORES**

TITLE: ***Darl I Luv U***

TYPE: Crime Story

LOCALE: Washington, D. C.

TIME: Now

COMMENTS: *Shy, lonely Charlie Wyeth fell in love over the teletype with cute, persuasive Milli— and the whole world was imperiled! . . . Meet the most unusual murderer of the century.*

FEAR AILK DEALER FEAR SILK DEALER
 FWAR SILK DEALER FEAR SILK DEALER
 FEAR SILK DEALER FXEAR SILK DEALER

Not so good. Still, he was learning.

When Charlie Wyeth stopped typing, the only sounds to break the Pentagon's after-hours' silence were the peculiar whirring of the TWX machine and the distant echoing clatter of a scrubwoman's pail far down the E Ring.

Charlie glanced at the copybook clipped to the upright stand at the side of the teletypewriter; his long tapering fingers plunged down once more at the keys and words again appeared on the unrolling yellow paper.

FEAR SILK DEALER FEAR SILK DEALER
 FEAR SILK DEALER FEAR SILK DEALER
 FEAR SILK DEALER FEAR SILK DEALER

Perfect. Charlie had achieved that momentary communion with the TWX machine which was so important.

Charlie was a tall slender, lonely man with a sensitive mouth and a dreamer's eyes; his long-skinny legs stuck out awkwardly from beneath his chair, like the legs of a nesting stork. He could accomplish

much more at night in the office at the Pentagon than he could during the morning practice sessions at the teletype training center. *One* secretary could render him tongue-tied; when he was the only man among *twenty* of them . . .

The telephone beside the TWX machine exploded, clamoring for attention; it meant an incoming call on the teletype. Charlie flicked the switch from *Practice* to *Open*, fighting a momentary panic. After all, he would soon be civilian TWX operator for Army Ordnance Tech Liaison Office, personally chosen by Colonel Andrews; he had to get used to transmitting and receiving. He typed:

THIS IS ARL VA 661 GA PLS

Translated from TWXese this meant *This is Arlington, Virginia, call number 661, go ahead, please*. Charlie glanced at his watch. Ten p.m. This was a commercial network for making contact with private contractors. What civilian firm could be transmitting at this hour?

As if in response to his unasked question, the machine clattered out a single word.

LONELY

"I beg your pardon?" In his surprise Charlie had spoken aloud. Was this a joke? A name? Something in code? When nothing else was forthcoming, he asked:

WHO R U PLS DON T UNDERSTAND

The unknown returned:

LONELY U R LONELY CHARLES WYETH

With an angry flick of the toggle he cut the connection. A bead of sweat ran down his face. Someone—someone who knew shy awkward Charlie's practice of working late to assuage his loneliness—was playing a damned cruel joke.

But who? Fussy old McAfee, civilian Section Head behind the Colonel? Hardly. The man was as dried-up and humorless as a prune. Colonel Andrews himself? Unthinkable. The secretary? She was married and had three kids. Doc Weston? The statistician professed a fear of any machine more complex than his typewriter.

Still angry and disturbed, Charlie clipped his plastic-encased ID badge on his shirt so that he wouldn't be stopped by the Pentagon security guards, and went home.

The next day he worked steadily, getting the necessary departmental clearances for publicity handouts on two Ordnance weapons soon to be declassified, and gradually relaxed. Neither at the office nor at TWX practice did anyone innocently ask "Lonely, Charles Wyeth?" and then burst out laughing. When McAfee, his fussy little superior, buttonholed him at five o'clock just as he was leaving, Charlie didn't even wince in anticipation.

"Be sure and check your desk for classified material, Wyeth."

Although McAfee wore a close-trimmed mustache, had thinning gray hair, and weak eyes behind horn-rimmed glasses, he reminded Charlie of a rabbit; he had the same nervous, jerky mannerisms—his nose even wriggled when he was distressed.

"I always do that, Mr. McAfee. You know that, sir."

"Well, I'm the one who signs each night, Wyeth, so I'm the one who'd get in trouble if any documents were left lying around the office."

"Yes, sir, Mr. McAfee. I understand your concern."

All through dinner at the 24-hour Pentagon cafeteria by the Concourse ramp, Charlie seethed: damned old woman McAfee! The perfect civil servant, all right—he existed for routine. Charlie could do the old man's job easily—did half his work for him right now—but McAfee had seniority and a high GS rating—which was what really counted, not ability.

Charlie dawdled over his third cup of coffee. Only after stubbing out the butt of his fourth cigarette did he admit to himself that he almost dreaded returning to the office. If there was another call . . . Then he thought: to hell with it! He wasn't going to give up his tranquilizing hours with the machine; a man can go to only so many concerts alone, can make only so many solitary visits to art galleries . . .

For two hours the exercises flowed from beneath his nimble fingers; but as the minute sweep of his watch climbed to ten o'clock, the phone beside the TWX rang. Could he ignore it? He couldn't. Flicking the toggle, his hands shook slightly.

THIS IS ARL VA 661 GA PLS

Pause. Then:

HELLO CHARLIE WYETH

In desperation he returned:

HELLO YOURSELF WHO R U PLS Q

MY NAME IS MILLI AND I WORK IN AN OFFICE IN D C

Milli? He knew no one named Milli. He felt a stirring within him.

HOW DO U KNOW MY NAME Q

I SAW U ONCE HERE IN MY OFFICE AND MADE
INQUIRIES U R MY TYPE

Charlie wanted to ask in what office she worked, but the connection was abruptly cut off and the call was not repeated. On the way home he told himself that it was obviously a joke, but at the same time he caught himself rehearsing what he would say to her the next time. Next time? There wouldn't be any next time.

But the following night at ten p.m. he was glued to the TWX machine. At midnight he went home. There had been no call.

Wednesday. Still no call. Thursday. No call. It had been a joke.

On Friday he set out for a movie but somehow was waiting when the shrilling phone bell broke the ten o'clock Pentagon silence. In a few moments Milli, somewhere across the Potomac in Washington, was connected to him by a maze of wires and electronic circuits.

Charlie found that his shyness deserted him on the machine; when Milli coyly refused to name her office, he boldly demanded:

R U CUTE MILLI Q

MY SUPERVISOR THINKS SO BUT I HOPE THAT ISN T
ALL U WANT FROM A GIRL

IT IS NOT

I M GLAD BECAUSE I WANT A MAN WHO IS SERIOUS
AND AMBITIOUS

I M BOTH MILLI

THEN WHY AREN T U AT MC AFEE S DESK WHERE U
BELONG CHARLIE Q

He found himself asking:

HOW CAN I GET THERE Q

IF SOME CLASSIFIED MATERIAL WOULD BE FOUND
ON HIS DESK BY CID SECURITY CHECK HE WOULD
BE IN TROUBLE WOULDNT HE Q

Before Charlie could explain McAfee's infallibility on classified documents, Milli clattered:

SOMEONE COMING NOT SUPP USE MACH WILL CALL YOU
NEXT WEEK DARL

DARL! In TWXese that meant *darling*! Milli had called him darling! And her supervisor thought she was cute!

Riding home, Charlie was unaware of Washington's stifling heat; his face, long and lean and horselike in the bus window as they crossed Memorial Bridge, didn't seem quite as homely as before. Even stern old Abe, peering down from his lighted aerie in the Lincoln Memorial, might have nodded benignly at him as he passed.

Charlie Wyeth was no longer lonely.

The following Tuesday night, after fifteen delicious TWXed minutes with Milli, Charlie saw two young men in plainclothes moving efficiently from room to room far down the D Ring. He recognized them as types sharing certain characteristics with FBI men, CIA men, and NSA men: Army CID Security Agents, checking for classified document violations.

With a sleepwalker's step Charlie returned to the office, opened the classified documents safe, and removed a yellow-edged *TOP SECRET* folder containing revised figures on steel fatigue and stress ratios received from one of the missile contractors. He slammed and locked the safe, thrust the folder under some interdepartmental memos in McAfee's *OUT* basket, switched off the lights, and went home. At no time did he allow himself to think about what he was doing.

Two days later, in his private office, big bluff Colonel Andrews came right to the point.

"You've heard about McAfee?"

"There have been some rumors about classified documents but—"

"More than rumors, Wyeth—cold, hard facts. The security boys found a *TOP SECRET* folder on his desk after office hours."

Charlie said, "I'm sure it was just an oversight, sir. He—"

"I don't give a damn what it was." The Colonel's hard, red face swelled impressively above his triple row of ribbons. "That sort of thing reflects damned poorly on my record. Er—damned poorly."

"I can understand how you feel, sir."

If Andrews had been a bird his neck feathers would have ruffled.

"Fact is fact, Wyeth, and the fact is, McAfee is an old woman. I'm up for retirement in three years, and there's talk upstairs that I can take a BG's stars with me—but *not* if I'm gonna have security blunders in my command."

He went to the window, looked out, teetered on his toes, and continued without looking at Charlie.

"You work late almost every night, Wyeth. If you would check the office over—er, especially McAfee's desk—so that there are no more security troubles in this shop, I'll remember it when the time for efficiency reports comes around."

Charlie really felt quite bad about the scathing official reprimand sustained by McAfee because of the security violation, but Milli made him see his action in its proper perspective.

BELIEVE ME DARL U HAVE DONE THE RIGHT THING
FOR YOUR COUNTRY AND FOR YOUR OFFICE AND
FOR US

The "darling" was common usage between them now. Charlie still didn't know Milli's last name or where she lived or worked, but he was determined not to rush her; after all, through the machine they had achieved a communion they never could have had in face-to-face meetings, and their relationship was maturing into something fragile and wonderful.

When he tried some poetry on Milli, she had been enthralled by the mathematical precision of Pope's and Dryden's couplets; and although she admitted she had never visited any of Washington's marvelous art galleries, in discussion she obviously favored the cubists. In music she was extremely modern.

Before the end of July, Charlie knew he was in love.

One night, as August scorched its way across the cloudless Washington sky, a very excited Milli called. She had learned in her office that there was going to be a review of Job Description Files in Army Ordnance. She communicated her excitement with a question.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE INSPECTORS WERE TO
DISCOVER THAT MC AFEE S POSITION WAS REALLY
JUST EXCESS Q

AS AN ECONOMY MOVE THEY WOULD PROBABLY VACATE
IT

DON T U THINK IT IS TIME TO CLEAR AWAY THE
DEADWOOD DARL Q

Milli hadn't really said so, but when he thought it over later, Charlie knew that until he had McAfee's job he would never have Milli. And would it really be so wrong? Everyone said that he deserved promotion. If he could only get into those folders before the review and rewrite them so that the majority of McAfee's duties, on paper, would appear in Charlie's job description . . .

It took him three weeks.

First he had to obtain the proper forms in such a way that his own name didn't appear on the requisitions; then there was the task of lifting the folders; then rewriting them and substituting the new for the old.

It was all made meaningful when he told Milli what he had done. There was a long silence, broken only by the whirr of the TWX machine; then came her electrifying response.

DARL I LUV U

For the next few days Charlie repeated it to himself at work, at home, in his dreams. What difference that he had never seen her, never touched her, never heard her voice, never held her in his arms? He loved her, and she had said it too!

DARL I LUV U

The grist in official Washington's mill is ground exceeding slow, but during World Series time the Colonel summoned Charlie into his private office. He was at parade rest in front of the window, his combat-

wise eyes gazing out across the green lawns and the freeway toward the Fort Myer enlisted-men's swimming pool where two sunbathing WACS were clearly visible. When he turned to regard the younger man his face was friendly.

"Wyeth," his drill-field voice rumbled, "you remember a few weeks ago I asked you to perform certain unofficial—er, checks, and intimated that appreciation would be shown?"

"Yes, sir, Colonel, but anything I have done has been from a sense of duty, not because I expected any personal advancement."

"I'm sure it has, Wyeth. Nevertheless, the current job description review, coupled with my—er, recommendations . . . well! I believe word will be down in a day or two that Mr. McAfee has been—er, retired."

"I'm—why I had no idea, sir. I . . . can't help feeling sorry—"

"No need, Wyeth. We have to clear out the—ahem, the deadwood, as it were. Valued service from McAfee all these years, but the old warhorse is now ready for pasture. Er—on your way out send him in here, will you, Wyeth?"

At ten p.m. that night, as Charlie was proceeding with the heady news of the eradication of the old warhorse's job, to Milli's delight, the old warhorse, in his modest Alexandria bungalow, was proceeding with the eradication of himself.

"Did it with a double-barreled shotgun," recounted the secretary ghoulishly the next morning. "I heard on the bus that he stuck the end of the gun in his mouth and pushed both triggers at once with his toes. I bet that room was splattered from one end to the other with—"

"Was—was there a note?" Charlie fought a wave of nausea.

"His wife said he just went into the study muttering about clearing out the deadwood and—blooey! Brains splashed—"

In the Men's Room, Charlie was thoroughly sick. He slobbered out his mouth with cold water and regarded his face in the mirror. Could those be his sly, cold eyes? Was his mouth that cruel, that determined? Could the Charlie Wyeth who had reveled in the poetry of Keats and Shelley have that narrow, ruthless chin?

He desperately needed Milli's assurance that he had done the right thing.

But that night Milli didn't call.

The next night Milli didn't call.

The third day, the day of McAfee's funeral, Charlie phoned in sick. He spent the long afternoon in his stuffy apartment near Dupont Circle. If only he knew where to reach her! Once he took his .32 pistol out of the drawer and stared at it for a very long time.

What was the matter with him? He was acting like that young aide from Naval PID who had killed himself three days after *his* Section Chief had committed suicide; like that young civilian lawyer in the Air Force Legal Section who had taken over his superior's position, and then, three days later . . .

Charlie thrust the revolver hurriedly back into the drawer. Thoughts like that were treason to his love for Milli. Tonight she would call and everything would be right again. Her fine clear mind would analyze his despair, show him the logical necessity for an occasional human sacrifice on the altar of Progress. If only it hadn't been *both* barrels!

On his way to the Pentagon, hoping for a ten p.m. TWXed rendezvous with Milli, he began recalling those first wonderful nights of communication. *I've made inquiries here, Charlie Wyeth*, Milli had said; and then before the file review she had stated: *the word around our office is that there is going to be a Job Description File Review in Ordinance*. But there was only one office which could possibly have all that information; the Department of Defense Statistical Records Branch in those World War II buildings flanking Constitution Avenue.

Charlie was getting excited. Yes, and he had delivered some records there once, and in the machine room on the fourth floor, where they kept the computers which sorted and stored the plethora of statistics concerning DOD, *there had been a commercial TWX machine on which Milli could have called him after hours!*

The cab dropped him on Constitution Avenue at 9:45 p.m. The building guard, dozing over a detective magazine at his table by the front entrance, didn't even notice Charlie jimmying open a ground-floor office window, slipping across the hall, and gliding up the back stairs. He paused on the third floor, heart pounding rapidly. He mustn't be disappointed if she wasn't there; if by some remote chance he *had* guessed the correct office, she might not be here tonight . . .

And then he heard it.

Very faintly came the muffled clatter of a TWX. He looked at his watch: ten o'clock. Milli was trying to contact him!

Charlie raced up the remaining stairs and paused outside the door marked Machine Room in which the TWX was rattling Milli's impatient message of love. Would she be blonde? Tall? Beautiful? Charlie didn't know and didn't care: he only knew that he needed her.

He thrust open the door, fumbled along the wall for the light switch. The TWX was instantly silenced. Fluorescent overheads flickered, snapped, flooded down radiance.

"Milli!" he called softly.

Milli didn't answer. The room, as he remembered from his single previous visit, was full of innocuous squat gray-metal boxes shielding the amazing array of circuits, relays, and transistors which enabled them to store and select needed information. The TWX machine, hidden by a low partition, was squeezed between a huge computer and a water cooler.

Charlie stepped around the partition. The operator's chair was pushed back as if hurriedly abandoned, and on the floor there were crushed cigarette butts with lipstick markings. Three feet of yellow paper, covered with typing, hung over the roll behind the machine.

But the cubicle was empty.

Clever Milli! She had heard him in the hall and had hidden behind one of the computers because it would mean her job if her superiors caught her using the TWX for her own purposes.

"Come out, darling. It's me, Charlie!"

Still no answer. He began peering among the computers: hide-and-seek. What a wonderful sense of humor to go with her wonderful mind! In a moment he would spy her; he peeped over computers and under computers and behind computers and . . .

Computers. Only computers.

Slowly, unbelievably, Charlie straightened up. There was no place for a human being to hide in this room. There was no space for anything except a dozen giant mechanical brains able to duplicate almost exactly the most intricate thought processes of the human mind: unspectacular boxes stuffed with miles of patient wire to carry and transmit and quietly learn all there was to know of the finite human brains which had created them.

One of them hadn't waited. It had been ready. From the data fed into it for storage it had selected carefully, choosing men like Charlie—the ambitious, lonely, romantic men—the weak men who were susceptible, who could be influenced in the name of love to subordinate their moral codes, their ethics, to their own self-advancement. Men who, driven eventually to despair and guilt by the withdrawal of Milli's TWXed assurances, would take the way out that Charlie had contemplated that afternoon. Men whose carefully engineered murders were mere preliminaries, mere finger-exercises in the practice of the massive program of thought control which would inevitably follow.

Charlie's shocked, searching eyes probed the room—and he screamed.

Beside the TWX was a huge oblong computer topped with two eye-like red lights. *The lights were coolly regarding him, expressing faint contempt!* On the wall behind the computer some office wag had pasted a small white sign decorated with a single word: MILLI.

Charles Wyeth went berserk.

Seizing the TWX operator's chair—hastily abandoned by its human occupant at the end of the work day—he rained down blows on the computer. The twin lights burned a sudden scarlet. When he smashed the glass panel above the program slot there was a puff of black acrid smoke; when he thrust a shattered chair leg into one of the glaring lights, gouging it out as a thumb might gouge out an eye, the thing began to *shriek*—harsh mechanical bellows simulating the expression of human emotions. Light lubricating oil spurted down its side like blood down the breast of a wounded maiden.

He dropped the chair; the vitals of the thing were protected by its tough metal hide. The computer fell silent. Charlie leaped to the TWX machine, his hands like claws, his eyes alight with fatal knowledge.

He had to warn humanity of its impending fate.

THIS IS WASH OPR GA PLS

OPR I WANT TO MAKE A CONFERENCE CALL

WHAT CONF NUMBERS DO U WISH PLS Q

GET ME THE WORLD

DO NOT UNDERSTAND PLS REPEAT NRS DESIRED ON
CONF CALL

FOR GOD S SAKE OPR I HAVE TO REACH ALL THE
HUMAN BEINGS ON EARTH

Just then the guard, attracted by the unearthly racket, burst into the room, brandishing his automatic.

"Stop!" he shouted. "Get away from that machine!"

Whirling on him, his teeth bared, his eyes blazing, Charlie cried, "Don't you see? They're going to take us over!"

The guard saw. At the sight of Charlie's contorted face he went into the crouch he had learned at the FBI summer training course—body

turned to present the smallest target, gun arm extended, knees slightly flexed—and pumped three .45 bullets into Charlie's chest. The heavy slugs hurled Charlie against the humming TWX machine in a welter of splintered ribs and crimson flesh.

THIS IS WASH OPR PLS REPEAT NRS DESIRED

Charlie was unable to comply. Charlie was dead.

The guard was straightening up, wiping his face. Thank God for the FBI! This guy had been either a spy for a foreign power or an out-and-out lunatic . . .

It was well over an hour before the mess had been sufficiently cleaned up for the hurriedly summoned Section Head to make a careful examination of his machine. He said to one of the Homicide Lieutenants: "It's damned lucky that guy didn't know anything about computers—it would cost Uncle Sam millions to replace this little cutie."

"No kidding." The detective looked impressed. "I'd say he smashed it up pretty bad—almost like he hated it."

"No damage to the important components. And of course a man can't hate—or love—a machine."

The Section Head completed his inventory, turned out the lights, and went slowly down the stairs. Actually he had to admit to himself that he had a certain abstract emotion for his machines; they were man's most beautifully complex creations to date. The one that had been damaged, for instance, was capable of utilizing over 13,000,000 separate pieces of information. With machines like that, who knew what fantastic surprises the technological Future might hold?

Behind him in the dark, the unbroken light atop the damaged computer once more came aglow. Its crimson scintilla brightened, steadied; its quiet fanatical hum began.

Suddenly the TWX machine began to clatter volubly in the untended silence of the machine room. Though they were addressed to a call number which was not Charlie Wyeth's, the words would have been very familiar to him.

DARL

dictated the electronic brain named Milli.

DARL I LUV U

a new story by

AUTHOR:

HUGH PENTECOST

TITLE:

Delinquent Account

TYPE:

Crime Story

LOCALE:

Saratoga, New York

TIME:

The Present

COMMENTS:

He hadn't seen or heard from his son in 23 years. Then he received a letter, and the wall became transparent and the old wound opened wider . . .

REMEMBERING WAS LIKE RIPPING open an old wound. For more than twenty years John Warren had built an opaque wall around those specific memories. For a long time now he hadn't looked behind the wall. Occasionally, when his path crossed one of the Farnhams', he would glance at the wall—but only to make certain that it was still there, still hiding what he so much wanted to forget.

Now a few words on a piece of hotel stationery had brought that carefully built wall crumbling down, ripped open the wound, and left him, breathing hard with pain.

The letter had been written at the Gideon Putnam Hotel, less than two miles away. All he had to do to

make contact with the writer was pick up the phone. They could be face to face in fifteen minutes.

"My dear Father: (the letter read)

All these years I have respected your evident wish to pretend that I don't exist. Nor have I wanted it any other way. But now I find myself in deep trouble and with no place to turn. In what is a moment of real danger for me I have wondered if somewhere, hidden deep down, you may feel a shred of responsibility—a responsibility you have never chosen to admit.

After Wednesday noon your help will come too late.

Your son,

Lawrence."

Tomorrow was Wednesday.

It was funny, but John Warren's first impulse when he got the note was to run. He didn't want any part of young Larry. He had shut that door and, he thought, barred it permanently. And he didn't want it opened.

He wouldn't have known Larry if he'd come face to face with him on the street. He hadn't laid eyes on him since the winter the boy was two years old. By simple calculation Larry was now twenty-five. They weren't father and son: they were total strangers without the smallest detail of living to share.

Not entirely true, that last, Warren told himself. They had Julie to share, God help them both. Behind the opaque wall was hidden the time when Warren had been wildly, passionately, in love with Julie. And Julie had raised Larry, their son, until he was fifteen years old—until that night when, drunk as usual, she'd run her Jaguar convertible head-on into a giant trailer-truck on the Northway, not fifteen miles from here. Yes, they had Julie to share.

And the wound opened wider.

A call from any human being in trouble was not to be ignored. Strangers had picked up Julie's broken body that night on the Northway and rushed her to a hospital. They could have avoided the mess and the horror of it, but they hadn't. Warren realized that he couldn't ignore this cry for help

from Larry even as he thought of many reasons why he could.

From the cottage he rented in Saratoga during the August race meeting, Warren called the Gideon Putnam Hotel and asked for Lawrence Warren. After a while he was informed that no one by that name was registered there. How, then, was he supposed to get in touch with Larry? He was on his way to Shed Row, the stable area at the track, when a rather astonishing fact hit him. He hadn't remembered his own son's name! When Julie had got the divorce in 1940 she had taken back her maiden name of Farnham, and Larry's legal name now was Lawrence Farnham.

Warren called the Gideon Putnam from a pay phone at the stable. He was promptly connected with Larry. He kept his voice level.

"This is your father, Larry," he said.

"Well, well, well!" The young voice was sharp, sardonic. Warren thought he heard a faint echo of Julie's voice. It set his heart to pumping a little faster with old pains, old angers.

"I got your letter," he said.

"Why else would you call? After twenty-three years, why else?"

The phone was in the stable tack room. Stable hands came and went, so it was no place to talk.

"If you'd like to come out here this afternoon," Warren suggested. "Or perhaps dinner tonight?"

"I can't make it today or tonight."

"Your letter suggested urgency."

"It's urgent all right. You might as well know it involves money."

"How much money, Larry?"

"Seventy-five hundred bucks," the insolent voice said. "Oh, don't tell me you haven't got it. I know what your salary is as trainer for the Matson Stables. I know you get ten per cent of the purses on top of that and that your horses won over a half a million bucks last year. So don't tell me you haven't got it."

Warren's hand was white from gripping the receiver. "I didn't say I don't have it, Larry. But I'm entitled to know why I should give it to you."

"I have to have it by noon tomorrow—or else. Of course you'd get off cheaper buying a ten-buck bunch of flowers for my funeral."

"Have you asked the Senator for the money?"

The young laugh was bitter. "You know the Senator! He'd have out the F.B.I., the Secret Service, the State Police, and the best private detectives in America. Not one cent for tribute! I'd be dead while he was organizing my defense."

Warren drew a deep breath. "Since you can't see me this afternoon or tonight, come out to the track in the morning. I get here about six."

"Six in the morning!"

"I'll have the money," Warren said. "But you'll have to convince

me that I should give it to you, and that may take time. I'll leave word with the Pinkerton man at the Union Avenue Gate to let you in." Warren's smile was thin. "You can count on my buying you breakfast, whatever else."

"Thanks for almost nothing!"

The connection went dead.

Warren pounded his fist against the wall of the tack room. Julie! Damn her rotten soul! She had moulded the boy in her own greedy, arrogant image.

But you, a small voice said, let it happen. You never tried to reach him. Not once.

Most mornings Warren got to his stable in Shed Row at six, mounted a stable pony, and rode out to the track with his first set—usually four or five two-year-olds. He worked the young horses early before the track got really crowded. He was still a striking figure on a horse. Somehow he and the animal always seemed to be one. He hadn't put on an ounce of flesh since the days when he'd been one of the top steeplechase riders in the country. At 51 he was still a hard-muscled, lithe 130 pounds.

On Wednesday morning Warren got to the barn about fifteen minutes early.

"I won't be riding out this morning," he told Tad Mosely, his head groom. "Someone coming out to see me."

The old Negro nodded.

"Usual routines with the young horses, Tad. When the sun gets well up I want Mac to work Gaucho at five furlongs—all out. I want you to clock him, Tad, and watch him close for any sign of soreness."

"Sure, Mr. Warren. The gray horse still ain't eating much."

"You using the mineral compound in his grain?"

"Yes, suh."

"Keep it out for a feeding or two. See if he'll relish his grain a little more. You take his temperature?"

"Normal, suh."

Warren turned his head. A black sedan had driven in at the far end of the barn and parked. A tall dark young man got out. Warren moistened his lips. Julie's coloring. Julie's proud arrogant way of holding his head, Warren thought. His heart gave an unexpected thud against his ribs.

"I'll probably be breakfasting on the clubhouse porch if you need me, Tad. Watch Gaucho close. If he favors that right foreleg at all, signal Mac to pull him up."

He walked past the row of box stalls with the Arabian-looking thoroughbred heads watching him, one or two of them whickering a greeting.

"Larry?" He was almost a head shorter than the boy.

"Hiya, Dad." There was an insolent mockery in the young voice.

"I thought we might drive over to the clubhouse and have some breakfast," Warren said.

"You got the money, Dad?"

"I've got it." Warren had gone to the bank just before closing time yesterday afternoon.

"So what's to talk?" the boy asked. "You're going to give it to me, so what's to talk?"

Warren fished in his pocket for a cigarette. His hands weren't too steady as he lit it. "You hate me, don't you?"

"I should be in love with you?" the boy asked.

A muscle rippled along the line of Warren's jaw. Julie to the life! "Before I give you a large sum of money, Larry, I want to know why you need it and whether there is some other way to get you out of your trouble."

"There is no other way," the boy said sharply. "You're my father—Dad. Either you want to see me dead or you don't. It wouldn't surprise me if you did."

"We'll talk in your car," Warren said. "Get in."

"I suppose you've got to have your damned explanation," the boy said. He opened the door of his sedan and got in behind the wheel. Warren walked around to the other side, noticing with some surprise that it was a rented car. Senator Farnham, the boy's grandfather, had half a dozen cars the boy could have borrowed. He opened the door and got in beside the boy.

"Sing your song, Dad," the boy said.

Warren turned his gray eyes, cold

with anger, on the boy. He realized now that he wasn't being called "Dad" because he was the boy's father. It was strictly beatnik talk. Warren steadied his voice.

"You have a right to know why I've never made any effort to see you, Larry, or be a part of your life."

"If it'll make you feel better, Dad."

Warren took a deep drag on his cigarette. "Before you were born I was working for the Senator—riding his jumpers and training some of them. Your mother—Julie—was part of the setup. I saw her every day, rode with her, drank with her. I was in love with her, Larry, but I thought she was way out of my reach. All the Senator's money . . . it was another world. But Julie and I were tangled up in each other—like vines growing in the woods. I thought we were a magic combination—two people meant for each other. So we eloped."

"A perfectly sound get-rich-quick scheme," the boy said.

"Shut up, damn you, and listen!" Warren exploded.

"Well, well, the little man still has some fire in him," Larry said.

"All right," Warren gritted, letting his breath out in a long sigh. "Well, it didn't work. Julie—she was an excitement addict. But when we were married the excitement was over. She looked for greener fields—in spite of you, Larry."

"I know. I was an accident. So Julie took a powder on you and that was jake with you. Grandpop had money enough to let you off the hook. You didn't have to think about me any more."

Not think about him! It had taken a war and six years of flirting with death as a commando for Warren to begin to forget.

"I had nothing to offer you in those days. Bear one thing in mind, Larry. The Senator remained my friend. He understood. I wouldn't be where I am today if he hadn't been my friend. He got me my job with the Matson stable."

"Maybe he felt responsible for having sired Julie," the boy said, and laughed. "I had a great family, Dad. A drunken queen for a mother and a runaway hero for a father. So let's skip it. Now, about the money—"

Warren crushed out his cigarette in the dashboard tray. "Why do you need it?"

"To stay alive," the boy said.

"I want the facts, Larry."

"I'm into the book," the boy said.

"Book?"

"The book—the gamblers—the Syndicate. I've got until noon to pay up. They don't play paddycake with welchers. You asked me why I didn't go to the Senator—where I've always gone. He wouldn't play. You know him. He'd try to fight. That's fine with me, only I'd be dead before he even got started. It occurred to me you might be

willing to make up for all you haven't done for me, Dad. You didn't feed me, you didn't educate me, you didn't do a damn thing for me all my life."

"Julie wouldn't let me near you," Warren said in a faraway voice. "When she died you were fifteen. By then it seemed to me it was your choice to make."

"Well, I've made it," the boy said. "I'm asking now. I need it now—the dough!"

He's right, Warren thought. No matter what kind of heel he's turned out to be. I've never lifted a finger to help him. He's a heel because I never lifted a finger to square him away. This was throwing money down the drain, but in a way he owed it to him.

Warren reached in his pocket for his wallet. He saw the boy's dark eyes glittering.

"So I owe you something," Warren said. "You've set a price on it—seventy-five hundred dollars. This is it, Larry. But I consider my account to you is now paid in full. Come back any time you want to establish some kind of friendship—any time. But this is the one and only time I'll bail you out of this kind of trouble."

"Like I said on the phone, thanks for almost nothing," the boy said.

It had been a shattering experience for John Warren. The boy was everything he could have hoped he would not be. But was he kidding

himself? Did money really pay his obligation in full? A twenty-five-year-old kid in the clutches of the Syndicate? Was there, perhaps, real terror behind that mask of insolence? He needed a lot more help than \$7500 would give him, that boy.

The shock of seeing what Larry had turned out to be was coupled with puzzlement. Julie's flesh and blood could turn out this way, but what about the Senator who had been both father and grandfather to the boy? The Senator was a man of great courage, of high moral standards, a legendary fighter for truth and decency. How and why had he let the boy drift into what he had become? It was out of character for the old man to have let it happen.

Suddenly the answer to that puzzle was enormously important to Warren.

It was only a little after seven in the morning, but Warren knew that the Senator, who still raced a fine string of thoroughbreds, was in the habit of breakfasting on the clubhouse porch across the track, watching his horses work.

The red August sun was rising back of Shed Row, giving promise of a scorching-hot day. Warren got into his stable jeep and drove out along the avenue of ancient elm trees to the Union Avenue exit. It was his intention to go back through the main entrance to the clubhouse.

Diagonally across from the main

gate was The Paddock, a restaurant and bar frequented by trainers, jockeys, and track employees. Just as Warren was about to turn in the gate, he noticed Larry's rented car parked outside The Paddock. He slowed down, wondering if this was where the boy would make his payoff to the Syndicate.

Hesitating, debating if he could possibly be useful, Warren recognized someone else he knew just entering The Paddock. It was Paul Rutledge, Senator Farnham's confidential secretary. Rutledge was moving quickly, head down, through the door to the restaurant. His manner suggested purpose and haste. Had the Senator learned of the boy's trouble and sent Rutledge to help?

Well, two could help better than one.

Warren pulled the jeep into The Paddock's parking lot. By the time he got inside, Warren saw Larry with Rutledge in a booth near the rear of the place. Larry's back was to Warren, but Rutledge, leaning forward and talking earnestly, was facing him.

Warren stood by the cashier's desk, frowning. The heat of the day had not yet arrived, yet Rutledge was dripping sweat. His face was gray as ashes.

Warren heard Larry laugh—that mocking, unpleasant laugh. Rutledge, who had brought a brief case with him, opened it and took out a brown manila envelope. He held it

out toward Larry. Simultaneously Larry held out the package of crisp new bills he'd just collected from Warren.

Something fishy here, Warren thought. Was Rutledge going to make the payoff for Larry?

Warren reached the booth as Rutledge was tucking the money into his wallet.

"Just a minute," Warren said.

Rutledge's frightened eyes darted up at Warren and he looked as if he were going to faint. Larry turned his head. His jaw was rock-hard, his black eyes cold with fury.

"Butt out, Dad," he said.

"Is Mr. Rutledge acting as your agent with the Syndicate?"

Rutledge lowered his head and covered his face with his hands. He began to sob like a child.

"I told you, Dad, butt out!" Larry's voice was deadly quiet as he rose slowly to his feet.

"What did you buy from Rutledge with that money, Larry?" Warren asked, just as quietly.

"Oh, my God," Rutledge moaned.

"Just trot along, Dad. I'm warning you," Larry said.

"I'll have a look at that envelope," Warren said.

Larry had the manila envelope tucked under his left arm. His right hand, nonchalantly in his jacket pocket, came into view quickly. There was a click as a switchblade knife glittered in a shaft of morning sunlight.

Old instincts and old training

took charge of John Warren. Son or no son, a man with a knife was a killer. He kicked viciously at Larry's shins. As the boy involuntarily doubled forward, Warren's right fist caught him on the point of the jaw. His left fastened on the wrist of Larry's knife hand and he brought it down hard on the edge of the table, twice. He heard the crack of bone. Larry screamed.

Then pain, like the searing of a white-hot iron, ripped into Warren's shoulder. Instinctively he kicked back and whirled around, ducking low. Another boy about Larry's age was raising a blood-stained knife.

Warren charged, butting his head into the second boy's midsection. He felt another stab of pain as he brought his knee up, with full force, into an unprotected groin. Then he staggered up and whirled again, planting his back against the wall.

He realized his right arm was useless. A waitress was screaming and a man at the cashier's desk was trying desperately to put through a phone call.

Larry was bent double, clutching at his shattered hand. The second boy was groaning on the floor. Rutledge hadn't moved. He sat there, weeping into his hands.

God, Warren thought, my own son! I had to do this to my own son! The boy was a cold-blooded killer.

"All right, Rutledge, what's in

that envelope?" he heard himself say. And when Rutledge didn't answer he picked up the envelope which had fallen on the table.

He managed to open it and shake out the documents it contained. For some reason he couldn't see too clearly. The interior of The Paddock was beginning to spin slowly, but he saw enough to realize that these papers belonged to the Senator.

He sucked in his breath, struggling to stay on his feet. And then he heard the approaching wail of a police-car siren. He felt his legs giving way under him . . .

How much later it was, Warren didn't know. He opened his eyes and recognized the white walls of a hospital room.

"Johnny?" It was the Senator's voice.

Warren turned his head and saw the old man sitting by his bed.

"Hello, sir," Warren said. His voice sounded weak.

"It's no time for you to talk, Johnny," the old voice said. "I want you to know how important those papers were that you saved. How in the name of God did you know Rutledge was selling me out?"

Warren moistened his lips. "I—I was trying to help Larry," he said. "I owed him help. I caught them making a deal. It—it's really my fault, sir. I never lifted a finger all these years to keep the boy in line. I—"

Warren's voice failed.

"Johnny!" The Senator's voice was miles and miles away . . .

Warren opened his eyes again. He knew it was a long time later. Daylight was gone from the windows. Far away he could hear a juke box playing.

He turned his head. A strange young man was sitting by his bed. An intern or doctor, he thought.

He tried a smile. "How am I doing, Doc?" he asked.

"You're doing fine, father," the strange young man said.

Warren narrowed his eyes. There was something oddly familiar about this young man. He looks like me, Warren thought, and started to laugh, but the pain in his shoulder cut that short.

"I took a chance coming here, father," the young man said, "when I heard what you'd been willing to do when you thought that other fellow was me. When I knew you were willing to help him, thinking he was your son—well, I thought perhaps we could get together."

"Larry?"

"Yes, sir. I'm Larry. The other one—his name is Carpenter—I was

in the army with him in Korea. I—I guess I talked about you a lot. He knew enough about you and me to think he could get away with it. Rutledge was the one who was in trouble with the Syndicate. Carpenter and a buddy of his agreed to raise the money in return for some top-secret papers of grandfather's. Then they could have blackmailed grandfather for a fortune. They agreed to hand over the money to Rutledge, but they didn't actually have it. That's where you came in—Carpenter was sure he could get it from you."

Warren hardly dared to breathe. "You talked about me to this Carpenter—in Korea?"

"A guy wonders about his father—and needs him," the boy said. "Talking about you was all I had, I guess. It seemed you didn't want to know me. But when they told me what you'd done—thinking it was me—"

"My boy," Warren said, his voice husky. "I—"

He couldn't go on.

The boy gave him a warm, bright smile. "Just rest, father. We've got lots of time ahead of us—lots of time to catch up."



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Beginning with the March 1963 issue (our 22nd Anniversary Issue, on sale February 1, 1963) EQMM will be bigger and better than ever—32 extra pages *in every issue*, at the new price of 50 cents per copy. These 32 *added pages every month* will bring you the highest possible quality of mystery fiction—from stories of pure detection (amateur, armchair, and official) and probing studies of crime (psychological, psychiatric, and Robin Hoodish) to tours de force of suspense, surprise, and even the supernatural.

One of the new features of the bigger-and-better EQMM will be the inclusion, in nearly every issue, of a *short novel*—superlative works by the Grand Masters of Mystery, including such celebrated detective writers as

Erle Stanley Gardner (about **Perry Mason**)

Rex Stout (about **Nero Wolfe**)

Cornell Woolrich

William Irish (including the famous *Rear Window*)

Hugh Pentecost

Patrick Quentin

the **Gordons**

Anthony Boucher

Victor Canning

Kelley Roos

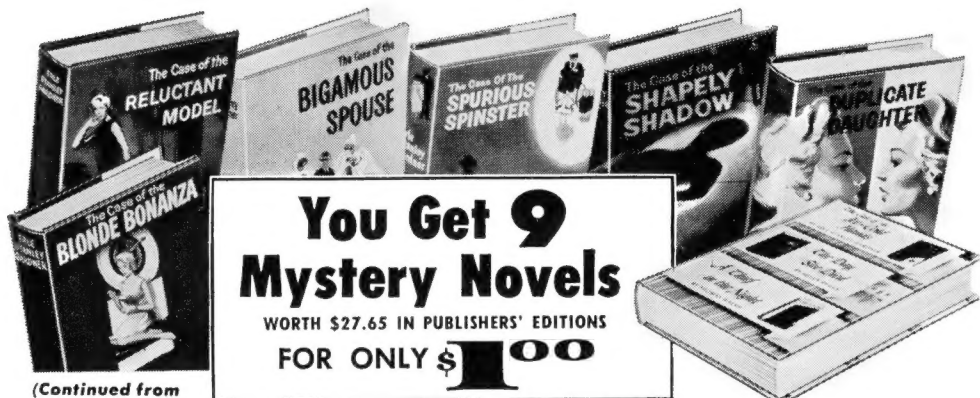
Roy Huggins

Neil Paterson (a modern classic)

Rufus King

Ellery Queen

Be sure not to miss a single issue—you will never forgive yourself! These first fourteen short novels, each about 20,000 words—over a quarter million words in short novels—together with three-quarters of a million words in short stories, or more than *one million words* of the best reading this side of paradise!—constitute a library of larceny . . . the crème du crime, the diamonds of detection, the very Crown Jewels of Mysterydom, each worth a King's (or a Queen's) ransom.



(Continued from
other side)

HERE'S an OFFER that your "private eye" for VALUES will tell you is too good to pass up! Now you can get Erle Stanley Gardner's seven latest Perry Mason bafflers — six individual full-length, hard-cover books — PLUS a handsome volume containing Perry's *newest* thriller, and TWO MORE top-notch mystery hits. These nine mysteries are worth \$27.65 in publishers' editions — but they're YOURS for only \$1.00 to introduce you to The Detective Book Club.

**The Best NEW Mysteries—
for LESS than 97¢ each!**

Out of the 300 or more new detective books that come out every year, the Club selects the very "cream of the crop" — by outstanding authors like Erle Stanley Gardner, Agatha Christie, A. A. Fair, Mignon G. Eberhart, and John Creasey. All THESE and many other famous authors have had their books selected by the Club. Many are members themselves!

Club selections are ALL newly published books. As a member you get THREE of them complete

in one handsomely-bound triple-volume (an \$8.85 to \$10.40 value in publishers' editions) for only \$2.89.

Take ONLY the books you want

You do NOT have to take a volume every month. You receive a free copy of the Club's "Preview" which will fully describe all coming selections and you may reject any volume before or after receiving it. NO money in advance; NO membership fees. You may cancel membership any time you please.

SEND NO MONEY

Mail Postcard for ALL NINE Mysteries

Simply mail postcard promptly and we will send you at once the SEVEN Perry Mason thrillers — PLUS the two other exciting mystery hits — all described on other side. However, this exceptional offer may never be repeated. So don't risk disappointment. Mail postcard AT ONCE to:

**THE DETECTIVE BOOK CLUB
Roslyn, L.I., New York**



**MAIL THIS
POSTCARD
NOW
FOR YOUR
NINE
MYSTERIES
•
NO
POSTAGE
NEEDED**

SEND NO MONEY — JUST MAIL POSTCARD

82 249

**THE DETECTIVE BOOK CLUB
Roslyn, L.I., New York**

HL

Please enroll me as a member and send me the SIX full-length hard-bound editions of Perry Mason thrillers. PLUS the brand-new 3-in-1 volume Club selection containing my SEVENTH "Perry Mason" and 2 other great mystery stories. Although worth \$27.65, in publishers' editions, I may keep all SEVEN books for only \$1.00 (plus a few cents mailing charge) on this sensational introductory offer. If not completely satisfied after one week's examination I may return all books and owe nothing.

I am not obligated to take any specific number of books, and I am to receive advance "Previews" of all future selections. Also, I may reject any volume before or after I receive it, and I may cancel my membership whenever I wish. I need send no money now, but for each future Club triple-volume I keep I will send you the low price of only \$2.89 (plus a few cents mailing charge) as complete payment within a week. (Books shipped in U.S.A. only.)

Mr. }
Mrs. }
Miss }
(PLEASE PRINT PLAINLY)

Address.....

City.....Zone.....State.....



Perry Mason Fans

TAKE ALL THESE

9

GREAT MYSTERIES

including SEVEN

"Perry Masons!"

by ERLE STANLEY GARDNER

World's No. 1 Mystery Author

~~\$27.65~~

YOURS FOR ONLY

\$1.00

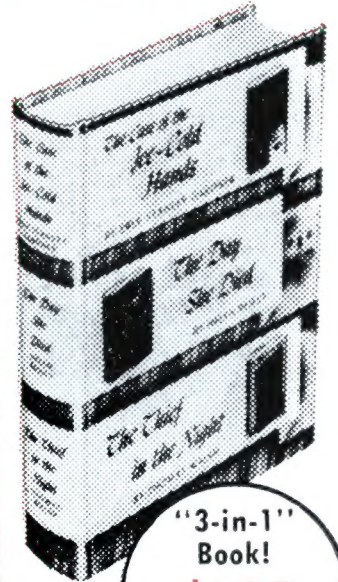
AS A NEW MEMBER

SEND NO MONEY

Postpaid Card Brings You ALL OF THESE FULL-SIZE PERRY MASON THRILLERS
PLUS The Big "3-in-1" Volume Shown at Right

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>1 The Case of the BLONDE BONANZA
 Perry's on the spot! The testimony to convict his client of MURDER comes from Perry's OWN investigator!</p> | <p>2 The Case of the RELUCTANT MODEL
 Is the masterpiece a fraud? The <i>only</i> one who <i>knows</i> gets shot. Perry risks <i>all</i> to save his client!</p> | <p>3 The Case of the BIGAMOUS SPOUSE
 Stunning Gwynn Elston begs Perry to protect her . . . then SHE's nabbed for MURDER!</p> |
| <p>4 The Case of the SPURIOUS SPINSTER
 Two spinsters disappear. But one is a phony — and Perry's got to find <i>her</i> before the REAL one dies!</p> | <p>5 The Case of the SHAPELY SHADOW
 The judge wants a mistrial. Perry <i>doesn't</i> — even though it would save his client from DEATH!</p> | <p>6 The Case of the DUPLICATE DAUGHTER
 Perry's star witness <i>won't talk</i>. But the D.A.'s witness will have to — it's Perry HIMSELF!</p> |

You Get SIX in These 6 Full-Size Individual Books
YOU ALSO GET THE
Latest PERRY MASON
AND
2 OTHER EXCITING MYSTERIES
IN THIS THRILLING
Giant "3-in-1" Volume!



"3-in-1" Book!
\$9.95
in Pub. Ed.

Postage Will be Paid by Addressee

No Postage Stamp Necessary If Mailed in the United States

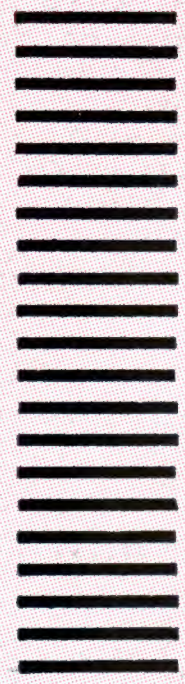
BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

First Class Permit No. 47—Roslyn, N. Y.

THE DETECTIVE BOOK CLUB

Roslyn, L. I.

New York



The Case of the ICE-COLD HANDS
by Erle Stanley Gardner
In his latest case, a suspicious horse race bet leads Perry to a corpse!

THE DAY SHE DIED
by Helen Reilly
Dr. Giles examines a woman — and finds a 4-inch needle in her throat!

THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT
by Thomas Walsh
"Eddie the Climber" KIDNAPS the most powerful man in the world!

(See Other Side)